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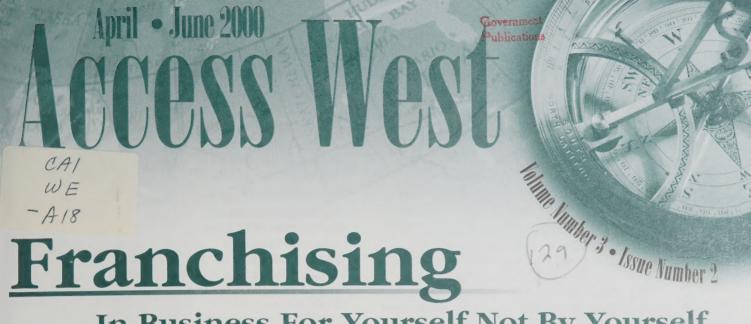












#### In Business For Yourself Not By Yourself

ranchising offers an excellent opportunity for you to be in business for yourself, while having access to the support and expertise of a successful business program. When you hear the word "franchise," you probably think of fast food restaurants such as Burger King, McDonald's or Wendy's. But the truth is franchising is so much wider. There are franchises available in almost every business area you can think of and in all price ranges.

Franchising in Canada is becoming more popular each year. It is not only getting bigger, but also getting better - and that has implications for all entrepreneurs. A decade of corporate downsizing has injected the sector with thousands of experienced managers looking to run their own firms, and they're taking advantage of a growing range of franchise options.

In our fast-paced economy, the rare capacity for rapid growth and quick branding could make franchising your perfect business model - or the driving force behind your next competitor. To help pinpoint some options, here are some trends in franchising.

#### **Beyond Fast-food**

Franchising is fast shedding its fast-food image, as more of Canada's growth industries are becoming franchise concepts. Canada's fastest growing franchise segment is consumer and business services, where the number of units is growing by more than 80 per cent a year - doubling the rate of the franchise industry as a whole.

Franchisors are tapping the growing demand for help with household chores. Most of whom are home-based - cutting down on the equity requirement. For example, where you might spend \$1 million on a name-brand-fast-food outlet, a landscaping or housecleaning franchise may cost as little as \$25,000. The opportunity for franchisors to come up with business concepts that work is growing rapidly as is the demand for them.

#### **Express** is Best

Although, fast-food franchisors are fuelling the growth of takeout and drive-thru concepts, they are not the only ones that can benefit from the express craze. Driving the express movement is the desire to profit from crammed consumer schedules. Smaller locations are easier to find that than full-

sized mall spaces or stand alone properties. Lower rents and building costs mean reduced overheads.

#### The Money

The rising stability of franchise operators has to the increased number of financiers creating new plans that make it easier for companies to acquire startup and growth capital. A practice called the Managing Partner Concept (MPC) is common among drugstore

Continued on Pg 3





### Monitoring Trends for the Life of Your Business

Monitoring trends is one of the most important things a business can do to know when it is time to re-evaluate the business plan and decide if there are changes to be made. Careful and continued analysis of consumer, economic and industry trends is an important part of developing new strategies as is knowing which of those trends could affect your business.

Knowing which trends you should monitor and how to monitor them is key to developing a successful strategy. If you are unsure as to which areas to monitor, just ask yourself, "If something happened to change in this area, how would it affect my business?"

In 1996 and 1997, the Policy Research Committee identified several key mega trends, or underlying forces, driving many of the social and economic changes taking place in Canada. These mega trends may help determine the framework within which your small business may respond to new challenges and opportunities. The mega trends include:

### Technological Change and the Information Revolution

The spread of information technology is changing the economy. The new knowledge-based society is being hailed as equivalent in scope and scale to the Industrial Revolution, which transformed the economy and society at the turn of the last century.

Information technologies offer unprecedented access to information, new learning tools and new cultural and entertainment forms.

This trend has influenced the growth of new industries and retooled old ones. Small businesses are clearly influenced by the growth in information technology and the opportunities to expand and reach new markets or audiences.

#### **Environmental Pressures**

Environmental challenges such as the quality of our air and water, the ozone layer, climate change, disposal of toxic substances, biodiversity and sustainable resource management face all of us in everything we do. As our understanding of environmental issues grows, we are realizing that sensitivity to pollution and other environmental stresses tends to be greater than previously thought.

The scale and nature of environmental risks are expected to evolve considerably. Rapid population growth and industrialization of the developing world will place increasing pressure on domestic and global environmental resources.

This trend has the enormity to affect every small business. As an example, the family farm grows or raises genetically altered products, the corner store sells these products and the conscientious consumers buy these products.

Other examples would include cleaning companies selling environmentally friendly or "green" products and the science and innovation companies researching and building new modes of emissionsfree transportation.

#### **Changing Demographics**

Canada's population growth is slowing, due to an aging population with a longer life expectancy and weak fertility rates. The decline in Canada's fertility rate is linked to the marked change in the role of

women over the past generation. With the majority of women now combining care responsibilities and full-time paid employment, family life has been transformed. The family with two earners has replaced the former typical family of male breadwinner and mother at home. As well, the proportion of lone-parent families continues to grow. Another key source of demographic change is immigration.

Canada receives more immigrants per capita than most other countries. The ethnic mix has changed dramatically over the past 40 years. The majority of immigrants to Canada now come from Asia and the Middle East. Projecting current trends, visible minorities will account for one in five Canadians by 2016, up from one in 20 in 1981, with half of them living in Toronto and Vancouver. Other aspects of demographic change include increasing urbanization and the fast growing Aboriginal population, which has a fertility rate twice as high as the national rate.

#### Globalization and American Influence

For Canada, the single most important sign of globalization is our relationship with the United States. Canada's dependence on the American market continues to grow and with over one billion dollars of trade daily, Canada and the United States are each other's largest economic partners by far. Stronger and more open commercial relations with the United States and Mexico offer Canada tremendous economic opportunities.

This trend may be of interest to a small business interested in expanding sales to include the U.S. or Mexico. Understanding the relationship among these three countries, along with trading regulations, will facilitate your move into new markets.

Staying informed is the key to keeping on top of trends and how these may affect the way your business operates. One way to stay informed is to read your local and regional newspapers, trade publications, review consumer trends and

# Access Manitoba

### Women Entrepreneurs Coming Together in Winnipeg

The Manitoba's Women's Enterprise Centre (WEC) is hosting this year, as part of the Women's Enterprise pan-western conference, an International conference for women in business April 24-26, 2000.

The three-day event, entitled **Women in Business Spanning the Globe**, offers a plethora of information and networking opportunities. It will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel and Winnipeg Convention Centre.

As well as promising exciting entertainment, the conference includes a product and service showcase, an Internet café, and 35 workshops featuring business experts in the areas of business growth, technology, human resources, wellness, personal/professional development, finance and marketing.

The conference also features seven inspiring keynote speakers who will ensure the conference is thoughtprovoking and stimulating from start to finish:

- · Nadja Piatka Risk and Reward,
- Margaret Hope Build Your Business, Build Your Network,



- · Nicole Beaudoin Turnaround,
- Grace White The Import/Export Challenge, and
- Ann Coombs as the conference's closing keynote speaker
   -What will we do to be Memorable?

### Other conference highlights include:

- Strategic Coach How to Avoid the Gap & How the Best get Better.
- The Great Canadian Pajama Party! A unique networking opportunity.
- Bear Pit (Question and Answer) A chance to ask the experts any business question you have!
- Internet Café Stay on-line with your business back home.
- Product and Service Showcase Explore the products that will help grow your business.
- Winnipeg at Night Enjoy the sights and sounds of Winnipeg at night.
- A taste of Manitoba Gala Dinner The grand finale to a wonderful event!

Registration is open to women entrepreneurs, policy makers, business service providers and entrepreneurship educators from around the world. Fees are as follows: Early-bird registration (before Feb. 15, 2000) \$250; regular registration (before March 31, 2000) \$300; and late or on-site registration (after March 31, 2000) \$350.

For more information or to receive a registration brochure, contact Carmen Neufeld of Frontline Associates at (204) 254-2293 or e-mail carmenn@escape.ca. You can also visit the WEC conference web site at http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/wec/etemp3.htm.

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# Follow the Yellow Brick Road...

The road may be yellow in Brunkild, Manitoba. But, it's mustard, not gold, that's creating that colour. **Venture Seeds Ltd.** officially opened its new mustard processing plant on January 13, 2000 in this community's, newly renovated, former grain elevator.

Company President René Caners says, Western Economic Diversification's Agriculture Value-Added Loan Fund was the key to opening this custom mustard seed processing plant. Venture Seeds Ltd. took possession of the facility from the Brunkild Coop Elevator Association in August 1999. The elevator was finding it increasingly difficult to compete with the newer, more efficient high throughput-style elevators being built by line companies. It likely would have had to close within the next four or five years. The renovations made by Venture Seeds with Western Economic Diversification's (WD) assistance included the installation of a new scale and a unique processing application. This resulted in the upgrade of the facility's elevator system and will likely add another 20 years to the elevator's life.

Provencher MP David Iftody, on behalf of the Honourable Ron J. Duhamel, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification and Francophonie, attended the official opening. "I am pleased that Venture Seeds will create new market opportunities for Manitoba seed producers and provide jobs in this rural community," said Mr. Iftody. "This initiative also shows how the Government of Canada, through Western Economic Diversification and its loans funds, can assist entrepreneurs to achieve their goals and contribute to the growth of Canada's rural economy."



With the signing of about 200 farmers to plant more than 20,00 hectares of mustard seed in the coming crop year, the Venture Seeds processing plant will create new market opportunities for seed producers and this rural community.

"Manitoba has the potential to greatly expand its mustard seed production and reach new and existing markets," said Mr. Caners. "This custom seed processing facility will not only encourage area producers to consider mustard as an alternative crop, but will help Manitoba compete with other players in the mustard seed market."

Venture Seeds received a \$350,000 repayable loan from the Farm Credit Corporation of Canada under WD's

Agricultural Value-Added Loan Fund. WD's Client Services group assisted Venture Seeds to formalize its business plan. Manitoba's

Crocus Investment Fund also contributed \$200,000 in loans to the initiative.

# Accessing Education and Technology in Rural Manitoba



Entrepreneurs and adults upgrading their skills in Southeastern Manitoba now have direct access to current technology, training, and business development resources, thanks to the opening of four new **Entrepreneur Technology and Education Centres (ETEC)** in the communities of Vita, South Junction, Sanford and Sainte-Anne.

The first ETEC was launched in November, 1998 in Morris, Manitoba. The four new sites, opened in January, are satellites of this original location. The Morris office is colocated with the Triple R Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) and one of 18 satellite offices of the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC). This collaborative approach ensures staff are well versed in available resources and allows clients to receive better coordinated services.

The ETECs are designed to be flexible in meeting the individual needs of clients. Individuals can visit a centre as their schedule allows and work at their own pace. Qualified instructors are available on site to help guide participants. The centres have convenient hours of operation, staying open late two evenings per week.

The Manitoba Department of Education and Training accredits all ETEC courses. Clients can earn credits toward completing high school and post-secondary education, as

well as apprenticeship certification. Many courses, such as accounting, are available to assist small business operators. There is a strong emphasis on computer related courses. At the ETEC in Sanford, seminars are available for clients to become Microsoft certified. With on line multimedia tutorials available, study options are limitless.

In order to remain competitive and economically viable, rural communities are preparing themselves for a more knowledge-based economy. As technology advances and availability increases, the options for rural residents expand. The world marketplace is shrinking and technology brings information closer to home.

The ETEC initiative is an excellent example of the cooperation and partnership existing between the governments of Canada and Manitoba, providing direct benefits to Manitobans. This initiative arose from needs which communities identified; and, the challenge was met collectively.

The ETECs are a joint venture of the Triple R CFDC, Morris-MacDonald, and Boundary and Sprague School Divisions. Western Economic Diversification contributed \$218,000 to help establish the new sites.

# Lights... Cameras... Action

QUIET ON THE SET - ROLL CAMERAS. Winnipeg is the "Hollywood of the Prairies" and now we're open for business year round, thanks to the completion of phase one of **Prairie Production Centre's** state-of-the-art sound and film studio.

This facility, which opened last November, is a 15,000-square-foot, 35-foot-high clear-span sound stage with 3,750 square feet of adjacent production and office space. No longer will film and television producers, filming in Manitoba, be restricted by weather conditions that previously forced them to convert local warehouses into studios. The new Prairie Production Centre has brought together all aspects of film production under one roof and is accessible year round to local, Canadian and foreign production companies.

Phase two of the facility, which is planned to open in September of this year, will house two additional sound stages, post production facilities, additional offices and tenant space for industry related business. When both phases are completed, the 67,000 square foot studio, the first of its kind in Manitoba, will further secure Manitoba's future as a major player in the national and international film and production industry.

The \$7.7 million Centre received a \$1 million contribution from the Canada/Manitoba Economic Development Partnership Agreement. Through March 2002, this agreement will direct \$40 million into strategic projects which will expand the international competitiveness of Manitoba's key growth sectors, commercialize new technologies, assist small- and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs, and enhance the long-term economic self-sustainability of rural and urban communities.

"Manitoba's film and television production industries have grown rapidly over the past few years; but, they require a strong infrastructure on which to expand and develop to their full potential in Manitoba," said Mr. Ron Duhamel, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification and



federal minister responsible for the Agreement. "Projects such as this will create lasting economic benefits for Canada's film industry, and will provide training and employment opportunities, ensuring a skilled labour pool for future productions."

This facility is another important advancement in securing the film industry's future as a major contributor to Manitoba's economy. It's an industry whose numbers and spin-off benefits are impressive - film productions representing over \$17 million were shot here just two years ago; and, that figure jumped to \$51 million by last year. By the end of 2000, benefits projected to be \$100 million. So let's keep the cameras rolling!

statistics. Suppliers are also great sources of information. Compare information from different sources and discuss your conclusions with others. No one says everyone has to believe the same thing, but seeing their perspective will help you to review your own findings more objectively. Of course these days, regularly surfing the internet may be the quickest and easiest way of obtaining information. Here are a few web sites which may provide useful information on monitoring trends. Trends that could affect your small business.

Policy and Research Initiative http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca/

Industry Canada http://www.strategis/

Canadian Policy Research Networks http://www.cprn.com

The Canada West Foundation http://www.cwf.ca/

### Planning and Negotiating your Financial Needs



The best time to plan and negotiate your fiscal credit needs is at your year-end, while your financial statement is still correct. It may be tempting to anticipate that your next interim statement will improve six months later, and frustrating to find that you would have been better off with a reduced line of credit at the beginning of the year rather than to have none at all in the middle of a poor season.

Plan your meeting with your banker to arrange your borrowing needs well in advance of when you will actually need the funds. With time on your side, and banks

being in competition to attract top calibre business accounts, you may find the bank more willing to negotiate competitive terms, such as security margins, interest rates and collateral requirements. When you are discussing your loan options, have all the information, which will be required, available for head office approval of the loan. Put your loan request in writing and finalize all loan documents before making any other financial commitments.

When you are determining how much you will need to meet your business requirements, take into consideration the initial and daily costs of running your business. Initial costs include things such as land, building, fixture, machinery, supplies, vehicles, pre-opening expenses and opening inventory. Daily operating costs include rising inventories, payroll, rent, taxes, advertising, accounts receivable and so on.

To do this, you will need to prepare a cash flow – a record of the cash, which comes in and goes out of your business. This record details all the sources which could bring cash into your business in any given month (cash sales, paid receivables, sale of an asset, interest on an investment, rental income) and detail, the ways in which cash leaves your business (wages, expenses, asset purchases, owner drawings).

A cash flow forecast, will give you a reasonable estimate of your cash requirements for the first 12 months. With this forecast, you predict all the funds you will receive and disburse, and the resulting surplus or deficit. Take into account not only the operating and capital budgets, but also the ratio of cash sales to credit sales and the paying habits of your customers. To estimate cash outflow you must also consider the promptness with which you intend to pay for your materials and merchandise.

#### By making a cash flow analysis you can estimate:

- how much cash will be needed to operate your business each month;
- when you will need additional short-term funds from the bank; and
- when you will have surplus funds to reduce your bank loans.

This information can assist you in timing your capital expenditures appropriately, accelerate collection of accounts receivable, minimize the possibility a cash shortage, plan short-term borrowing well in advance and perhaps invest a temporary surplus. If you cannot do a cash flow forecast yourself, it would be best to hire someone to do it for you.

When negotiating your business loan, it is a good idea not to borrow using an overdraft unless your line of credit is established for such borrowing. Instead, arrange separately and annually a line of credit to meet peak requirements (but borrow only what is necessary, when necessary). Any verbal line of credit for recurring overdrafts should be formalized as soon as possible.

It is easier to borrow money by pledging fixed assets. So, don't put all your equity into machinery or buildings; save it for working capital needs. To provide working capital, banks can provide short-term loans, long-term mortgage loans and loans against inventory.

Short term financing is usually used to pay for current assets, such as inventory accounts receivable and other working capital requirements, and is usually covered by a demand note at the bank. Finance rates can fluctuate weekly or monthly depending upon the need. A long-term loan is usually used to buy fixed assets such as buildings, machinery and fixtures, and is paid back in equal monthly installments.

At some point most businesses will require financial aid. Your relationship with a financial institution begins even before you start your business. So, develop a solid working relationship with your bank from the very beginning. Faster and better services are supplied when a lending institution is familiar with its customers and their business. In that environment, suggestions for keeping a business financially healthy are more readily given, crisis borrowing can be avoided, and good loan planning can be developed.

# The Competitive Edge is Getting Sharper

To maintain a competitive advantage in a marketplace which is rapidly evolving, Canadian business leaders have to embrace new ways of thinking. For high technology businesses, this means focusing on innovation, continuous learning and the development of intellectual assets.

The challenge to stay competitive has encouraged a consortium of industry and academic partners to create the **Masters of Software Technology program (WestMOST)** currently available through the University of Alberta, Technical University of B.C. and University of Victoria.

"The software industry is well aware that information and knowledge are replacing material goods as the chief operating capital of a business," notes Eldon Wig, WestMOST's Executive Director.

"Time-to-market and first-mover advantages are very real issues in the world of software," adds Wig. "It doesn't matter if you have a 'hot' product idea, you still have to get it to market before the competition."

Unfortunately, the development of high technology products has often been plagued with both time and budgetary problems. Emerging software engineering methods, tools and processes from university and industry labs are addressing problems of software productivity and quality. These require appropriate software technology training and education programs if they are going to impact the bottom line.

WestMOST amplifies the linkages between industry and academia," says Wig. "We have the pragmatic insights of the industry and the intellectual acuity of the academic community because they are both at the table."

The WestMOST program possesses three unique characteristics: Flexibility, Credibility and Relevance.

Flexibility

Course format is extremely flexible ranging from full-term offerings to intensive

five-and six-day

Courses are
delivered at
company sites or via
distance education
mediums. The
flexible delivery
format coupled with
emerging
communication
technologies
supports a long-term
goal of providing a



"virtual" classroom environment for WestMOST students. All students are expected to remain employed in the software industry while enrolled in the program. "We see the ability to combine work with the pursuit of an advanced degree as a key benefit," notes Wig. Employers do not have to interrupt their workflow, and their employees can maintain their current income and standard of living.

#### Credibility

Students are taught, coached and mentored by leaders in software engineering, product development and project management. Instructors, like Dr. Paul Sorenson, an internationally respected computer science professor at the University of Alberta, are engaged in leading edge research to improve software quality. Dr. Sorenson typifies the caliber of the WestMOST instructor base.

#### Relevance

Instructors use industrial case studies developed in cooperation with the student and their employer. Students apply the information learned to relevant problems at their workplace.

Completion of the full program (8 courses plus an onsite project) takes approximately 2 to 3 years. "The program attracts mid to senior-level software developers who want to enhance their technical skills and move to the highest levels of team leadership and project management," says Wig. "We are focused on processes rather than technologies, with the primary goal of equipping students with advanced capabilities that align with either a software architect role or a software manager role."

Although the Canadian technology marketplace is a dynamic and exciting environment, its position in the global community will only be fully realized when professional development and education are seen as a long-term investment on behalf of both

employee and employer. This is a perspective supported by the National Research Council. The council found that 76 per cent of companies which considered software or software skills as 'mission critical' would participate in long-term training if it was sufficiently supported by industry, government and academic interests.

It is both ironic and unfortunate, however, that most organizations focus on short-term goals at the expense of long-term ones. Perhaps if CEOs and senior managers considered a cost/benefit analysis, they would discover that the return-on-investment in long-term training and employee development far outweighs the risks of focusing on the short term.

Consider the perspective of the employee. Their needs are strongly aligned with the goals most companies have, which is to remain profitable, develop new interests, and feel they are an important part of their community. By encouraging and empowering employees to gain new skills, you are adding value to your company, for which they will reward you with increased productivity and a revitalized interest in developing your company's competitive edge.

Lastly, employees who feel their company values their contributions will be less likely to be looking for opportunities elsewhere. Given that the cost of hiring and training new IT talent is estimated to exceed \$25,000, there is an obvious bottom-line incentive to gain and keep your employees' loyalties.

Software companies polled by the National Research Council identified four general business issues that directly impacted their bottom line. These were recruiting quality people, delivering customer satisfaction, keeping delivery schedules and managing growth. Management consultants such as Dave Grafton, Regional Manager of LGS Edmonton, foresee a positive role for education in addressing these concerns. "Ultimately I believe the WestMOST program will be an ideal vehicle for strengthening the technical leadership and competitiveness of our senior IT professionals," says Grafton.

Institutions affiliated with WestMOST provide an accredited master's degree program open to individuals who have an undergraduate degree in computing science or a similar field, and at least two years of relevant work experience in the software industry.

For more information, visit the WestMOST web site at: www.westmost.ca

Or, feel free to contact:

Eldon Wig Executive Director, WestMOST Phone: (780) 460-0280 Fax: (780) 460-2821 e-mail: eldonwig@soft-coach.com

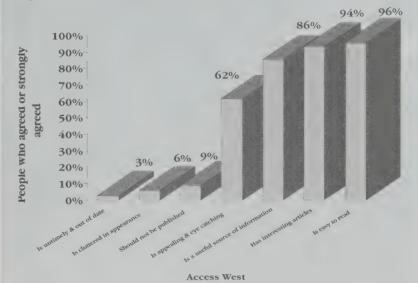
#### Readership Survey Results

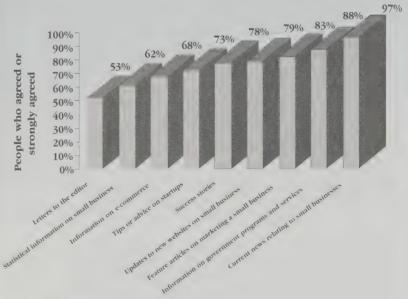
I would like to thank everyone who contributed to Access West survey. The information provided will help make this a better publication and provide readers with the most needed information. A few highlights of the results and some of the additional comments show:

- The majority of Access West subscribers read 80 per cent of this publication.
- The most useful information is current news as it relates to small business and information on government programs and services.

Based on the information provided, here are a few planned improvements:

- The newsletter format will be adjusted to portray a more business orientated publication.
- The regional insert will be moved so it doesn't interfere with the flow of the newsletter.
- Stories will be kept to a page or continued on the very next page, if possible, and not further in the newsletter.





What people most prefer to read in Access West

Thank you again for your participation. The winners of WD's Millennium CD entitled **Go West** are:

Terry Lindell of Manitoba Jack Evans of B.C.

Daryl Friesen of Alberta Helen Beslic of Saskatchewan If undeliverable, return to:

WD Edmonton Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4H7

### Is your Business Missing Out on Easy Cash?

Cash strapped small businesses are not applying for federal research tax credits simply because they're not aware of them or the process sounds complicated and unrelated to what the business does. But, don't let that fool you.

The program is called the
Scientific Research and
Experimental Development
Tax Incentive. However,
words like "scientific research"
and "experimental development"
suggest complex research and
development (R&D) projects and
may confuse the typical small-business
owner. In reality, product research and/or
development activities can be rather
"ordinary" as long as they are linked to some type of

technological advancement.

Simply put, if a project involves the development or enhancement of a product or research into a new process or approach that may provide increased efficiency or costefficiency in the production process, it may qualify for R&D tax credits. Even if, an entire project is not be eligible for tax credits, parts of the project may still qualify.

The types of projects can be as diverse as the people behind them. For example, projects could involve research into a new processed food item like a low fat brownie or muffin, the development of new software or hardware, investigations into new and innovative applications using alternative materials, or time and effort spent inventing a new farm implement. It's also important to realize that projects which don't result in a marketable product may also qualify for tax credits.

The ultimate purpose behind the R&D tax credit program is to encourage Canadian companies to develop new products or

better ways of doing things - an innovation incentive.

Without these incentives, most Canadian companies would not consider investing in R&D. It takes a lot of time, effort and money.

To qualify for tax benefits, a company or individual must keep good records and capture the details associated with a project and its component parts.

Expenses associated with wages, materials, machinery, equipment, and some overhead and contracted R&D costs are eligible for the investment tax credit (ITC). Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) will review most ITC applications; so, businesses

must have their paperwork in order. A firm's accountant can usually manage this information. Guidance and support from CCRA is free.

An information kit is also available which can be mailed. CCRA can also provide a workshop or seminar in your area to explain the program, its benefits and the requirements to your clients or clients' accountants.

If you are interested in either of the above, contact one of the program coordinators in your region, or visit the CCRA web site at: www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/sred/

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This newsletter is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada. If you would like to contribute to this publication or have any questions, please contact the editor, Johanna MacDonald at: Tel.: (780) 495-4320 Fax: (780) 495-6223 E-mail: access.west@wd.gc.ca Aussi disponible en français.



# ACCESS VESTILIANDE SEPTEMBER 2000 ACCESS VESTILIANDE SEPTEMBER 2000 ACCESS VESTILIANDE SEPTEMBER 3 ACCESS VESTILIANDE SEPTEM

KPMG Consulting LP has been commissioned by Western Economic Diversification (WD) to assess the status of e-business among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Western Canada. The study is designed to assess the current state of e-business, the challenges confronting SMEs, and their readiness to embrace e-business as a response to these challenges.

The advent of e-business in the past five years has caused companies to either radically restructure their conventional means of doing business or at least consider that adoption of e-business is in their future. Today, many "virtual companies" completely rely on e-business to survive. On the other hand, there are companies that are strictly "bricks and mortar," struggling to find the time, money and is sometimes, the reason to develop an e-business component. And, there are hybrid companies that use both virtual and conventional business practices.

The "big" companies, and those that have succeeded in the e-business world, are in the news. We seldom hear of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) overcoming the odds. Yet there are success stories often untold. SMEs are beginning to recognize the value of having on-line services or access for their clients or other businesses. Other SMEs have grasped the concept entirely and conduct all of their business through the Internet. It becomes an issue of leadership and being realistic—does management have the knowledge to forecast the impact e-business on the firm? Does a business have the skills and resources to invest in e-business?

## Challenges for SMEs—e-business, a significant investment in light of uncertainties

SMEs have challenges similar to big business but the economies of scale make it riskier for SMEs to invest in e-business technology. Challenges are often the same for SMEs whether they practice conventional or virtual business:

• <u>Financial resources</u>—having enough money to invest in technology and other related costs for starting an e-business.

- <u>Human resources</u>—having staff to develop a new type of business, having the appropriate skill base within the current organization, attracting and retaining employees with applicable skills.
- <u>Time</u>—finding the time to invest in the development and implementation of an e-business component.
- <u>Risk taking</u>—economies of scale compared to a large company make it riskier for an SME to invest in a venture that is still relatively new, unfamiliar and uncertain.

#### Defining the e-business challenges

The opportunities of the new e-business frontier are tempered by a number of challenges. The main challenges are:

- Need for information—Respondents stated that there is an imbalance between suppliers and customers. Suppliers are offering solutions to buyers who are generally unaware of e-business trends, issues, developments and the manner that it is impacting their respective industries. SMEs often feel overwhelmed—too much information, a "different" technical language that has to be learned, and lack of knowledge for what is needed to maintain current and future business needs.
- <u>Lack of confidence</u>—Even when SMEs are convinced about the benefits of adopting e-business strategies, they lack confidence about suppliers and the potential customer base. Many SMEs stated they are reluctant to change and hesitant to take the risk because they are unsure about the relevance of e-business to their specific line of business. As well, questions arose about whether or not the initial and on-going investment would generate profits, not just revenue.
- <u>Lack of resources and skills</u>—SMEs, suppliers, and leaders all stated that it is difficult for SMEs to find, attract, and retain qualified staff. This shortage of technically skilled people is a problem across Canada. The lack of resources also refers to the shortage of time and lack of money to invest in an e-business strategy.
- <u>Poor access to capital</u>—Having access to venture capital and other types of funding is a barrier for SMEs and suppliers.







# Spend some time in the future

#### When?

October 23-26, 2000

#### Where?

Telus Convention Centre Calgary, Alberta

#### What?

Individuals, organizations, communities, businesses and governments in a connected society.

A 4-day featuring multiple tracks, over 100 workshops, keynote speakers, panel discussions, and post-conference materials.

#### Who?

Join 1000 conference participants and hundreds of exhibitors and sponsors. Anyone in business, education, government or health who is serious about working and living "Smart" should attend.

www.smart2000.org

#### Smart2000 conference and exhibition

smart people

places policies

Be part of this exciting, unique, international conference and exhibition. Be among the key players, policy makers, decision makers, entrepreneurs and leaders who make a difference. Use the occasion for your own professional development.

The world of digital connectedness is changing the way we work, play, learn and interact with others. Technology touches everything we do. New challenges and opportunities face us everyday, and new rules are emerging.

This is a new world of "e." Business, learning, health, the professions and community structures are all undergoing profound change. We need to understand what this new world means to us and we need to play a role in developing policies that will help, not hinder, our quest for success.

#### Smart 2000 is all about these issues.

The conference is organized around the theme of "Smart People, Smart Places, Smart Policies." Smart2K will pull together policies, initiatives and opportunities relevant to all participants around these themes. You will have an opportunity to tackle barriers to success. See how smart people, places and policies relate to your own professional and personal lives.

Both the conference and exhibition will reflect and provide illustrations of these themes in a series of activities and events specific to your interests - education, health, e-commerce, banking, real estate, agriculture, oil and gas, business and government.

The Smart2K exhibition will focus on hands-on, interactive, challenging experiences with the latest technologies and applications. Over 5,000 visitors are expected to visit 400 booths, showcasing a wide variety of products and services.

If your company or organization would like to participate as an exhibitor in Smart2000, call (403) 543-1174 or complete the exhibitor's page found on the web site:

#### www.smart2000.org/exhibits/exhibits.html

Check out the ever-changing web site at www.smart2000.org for details and updates.

Conference participants should register early to take advantage of "early bird" rates. Group rates are also available. Register on-line or contact Smart2000 at (403) 543-1179. You can also contact WD's Jamie Evaskevich at (780) 495-8384 to obtain more information or a faxed registration form.

#### Continued from page 1

Developing and implementing an e-business strategy can be very expensive for an SME and many look for financial assistance to make the first step. Yet many SMEs reported they don't know whom to approach for venture capital. How do you access venture capital—especially in western Canada?

# SMEs, e-business suppliers and government—room enough for three?

- <u>Is government needed/wanted?</u> Some SMEs need assistance in establishing a strong presence on the Internet. Governments have gotten out of the "business of being in business". For the most part government are not giving financial grants to business. Some SMEs stated that government should provide financial assistance; most respondents stated that information about where to access loans for business development and who to contact for venture capital would be more valuable.
- <u>Information is critical</u> SMEs frequently mentioned an information "portal" is needed for SMEs and consumers in Western Canada. Today, information on e-business is produced by the suppliers and is scattered across many web sites.
- Supporting e-business planning—Part of the next wave for on-line technology will be the amalgamation and coordination of information—a type of one-stop shopping for citizens and consumers. SMEs need meaningful and neutral information on e-business planning: the availability of venture capital, funding options, costs of starting up an e-business enterprise, and the types of technical architecture and infrastructure needed for operating an e-business. For the consumer, offering a gateway to on-line businesses in Western Canada would be timesaving and beneficial for SMEs in western Canada. Purchasing dollars can be spent in the local economy and visitors from across the country and the rest of the world can be introduced to SMEs in Western Canada through electronic means.
- <u>A role for government</u>—SMEs value government facilitating and coordinating e-business initiatives in western Canada. Each of the western provincial governments, some more active than others, have initiatives in place to deal with the

new e-business economy. Industry and business associations, who often work with government on industry and economic policy, are also in a state of transition. They are exploring and defining their role in relation to their members and the direction that e-business may take. Governments, working together—federal, provincial and municipal working with industry and business associations can help to ensure that a coordinated and participative approach is taken to the formulation and execution of an e-business strategy.

#### Leadership in the new frontier

The transition to an e-business economy constitutes an opportunity for SMEs in Western Canada. Traditionally a region of pioneers, entrepreneurs, and risk-takers, the e-business frontier can be exploited in Western Canada through public/private partnerships for:

- <u>Roundtables</u>—across Western Canada for discussing this report and launching "go forward" initiatives.
- <u>Consultations</u>—between levels of government to clarify their roles in the e-business revolution.
- Engaging—SME owners and senior management and SME representatives such as the Chambers of Commerce and industry associations to enhance their members' awareness/knowledge of the opportunities and threats of e-business.

This report is one of many studies on the current and future state of e-business. While there is an abundance of information on SMEs, this is the first report specifically focusing on the state of e-business readiness of SMEs in Western Canada.

Overall, SMEs are in a state of transition whereby their conventional means of doing business are being challenged. The conventional means of transacting business is being replaced by a system that is still being defined. The redefining of the workplace and shopping place is a global phenomenon that will impact both the business-to-business and business-to-consumer relationships as well as how we work and play, live and learn.

For a complete copy of this report, you can download a .pdf format from WD's web site at www.wd.gc.ca or contact our Department at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

In order to address the needs of western SMEs, Western Economic Diversification has organized a series of roundtable discussions to take place throughout the West. If you are interested in learning more about the discussion topics or are interested in participating, contact the following representatives:

#### **E-Business Conference Dates and Locations**

#### **Contacts**

 Manitoba (Winnipeg)
 Friday, June 23, 2000
 Shirley Stimpson
 (204) 983-0701

 Saskatchewan (Saskatoon)
 Friday, June 30, 2000
 Rob Greer
 (306) 975-5861

 Alberta (Edmonton)
 Wednesday, July 12, 2000
 John Benedik
 (780) 495-4503

 B.C. (Vancouver)
 Monday, June 26, 2000
 Dennis Bruchet
 (604) 666-1332

#### Computer Viruses in Small Business "I love You NOT"

Computer viruses are no longer a minor nuisance. For small business, the recent "Love Bug" virus and its copycat versions have resulted in huge losses in productivity and revenue. Your

According to Network Associates Antivirus, "the Love Bug outbreak has been the most widespread ever. Tens of millions of computers have been affected across the globe, originating in Asia, and then quickly spreading to Europe, U.S. and Canada."

So how can small business recover from such an attack and how can they protect themselves from future virus threats?

Disabling Windows scripting involves clicking on the **Start** button, then **Settings**, then **Control Panel**, then click on **Add/Remove programs**, then click on the **Windows Setup** tab, next, double click on **Accessories** to get the details, then uncheck "**Windows Scripting Host**" if it is checked. Finally, click "ok." Updates to Outlook 97, 98 and 2000 are also available to make it more difficult to inadvertently launch attachments. For more information, see:

www.microsoft.com/technet/security/virus/vbslvtr.asp

#### I've got the virus! What do I do?

Small Business needs to protect itself.

If your business consists of networked computers, and one of them becomes infected, immediately disconnect that computer from the network to prevent further spread. Once disconnected, your computer is no longer able to propagate the virus to others on your network. From a non-infected computer, check the web for updates to your antivirus software to deal with the virus. Most vendors quickly post detailed information on their web site to instruct you how to rid your computer(s) of the virus.

The key is to be able to recognize quickly that your business has been hit by a virus. If you do not have the technical expertise in your organization, have a contract with a computer expert to assist you in the event a computer virus seriously impacts your business.

#### **Prevention is KEY**

More episodes such as the "Love Bug" outbreak may be inevitable. Once a virus is found, it can be eradicated by applying the posted antivirus updates. If you have an e-mail server, software can be installed to screen and clean infected files, further protecting your network data.

The bottom line is... have antivirus software and keep it up-to-date. Antivirus vendors have weekly updates available for download on their websites. Make a habit of regularly downloading updates to ensure you are protected.

Also, check their web sites often to keep abreast of the latest virus threats. You may be able to prevent costly downtime if you can protect your computer(s), before the virus makes its way to your organization.

Be wary of opening attachments you are not expecting or attachments from unknown sources, especially ones containing jokes. Attachments with .exe or .vbs file extensions are especially dangerous. If you need to look at the attachment, scan the file first with your updated anti-virus software.

Disable Windows scripting. Windows scripting is an option that allows tasks to be automated in Windows 98 and 2000 and NT, if installed. If scripting had been turned off in advance, you would have stopped the "Love Bug" virus from spreading when the attachment was opened. If not, no antivirus software could have stopped it.

#### WD Web Update Makes It Easier and Faster to Navigate

Over the last few months, work has been underway to make changes to the WD web site. The site has now been reorganized and information distributed under new headings making information easier to find, and also removing the need to scroll at the front page of the site. We've started to delete some of the extremely outdated material and you'll also notice that we've incorporated some of the images that WD has used in other promotional material.

We've added several new information products/links at the site:

- Legal information to assist small businesses in each province
- WD Events including workshops and info fairs are now listed online
- Under Interactive Tools we've added a link to the new "Steps to Capital Growth" skill development program online at Strategis
- -We've added a link to a standard **Privacy Policy**, **Official Languages Policy and other disclaimers**.

At the same time, we've started to migrate the web site to comply with the Government of Canada "common look and feel guidelines." These guidelines are quite extensive and include things like common navigation and design, organizing the web site so it's easy to understand, as well as making the site accessible to people with disabilities. We will be working hard over the next few months to make sure we meet all of the government's online requirements.

We'll keep you posted as the plans for the web site evolve and in the mean time, check out our revised site at www.wd.gc.ca

# Welcome To The World Of International Business!

Exporting is a whole new world to explore for a business. You hear about it on TV you hear it on the radio: you see add in

• Analysis of the information you have gathered;

# Access B.C.

## 2,669 Find Out More about Government Services for Small Business

On March 25th in Vancouver 2,669 local small businesses and budding entrepreneurs took part in the Vancouver Small Business Conference and Info-Fair held at the Pacific Coliseum. Organized by Western Economic Diversification Canada, and sponsored by the Business Development Bank of Canada, the event opened with a conference bringing together over 320 members of the local business community.

Raymond Chan, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), and Member of Parliament for Richmond, hosted the event.

During the conference, moderated by Ron Yuers, President, The Kryton Group of Companies, Secretary of State Chan outlined the federal government's initiatives to support business development and growth. Three local successful entrepreneurs then shared their business experiences with conference participants:

- Harold Copping, President, Teleflex (Canada) Ltd.
- Bob Maddocks, President, Maddocks Systems Inc.
- · Sushma Datt, President, Rim Jhim Radio FM.

The associated Small Business Info-Fair showcased over 20 exhibitors from different federal departments who were on hand to answer questions and to explain products and services available to businesses and entrepreneurs in the Lower Mainland. More than twenty-six hundred people visited the Info-Fair.

Also part of the Info-Fair, twenty-seven workshops on topics ranging from – E-Commerce to Self Employment for Women in the New Millennium to Correction Canada's Alternatives to In-house Production – helped provide 2,165 participants with useful information for putting their business plans into operation.

These Info-Fairs have enabled the public and the business community to obtain valuable information on the support the Government of Canada offers business to help encourage growth and prosperity.

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# Federal Government Invests Additional Funding In Coastal Communities

At a news conference Monday, April 17, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Herb Dhaliwal and Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification, Ron J. Duhamel announced additional funding for community economic development in British Columbia's coastal communities. The funding was administered under Western Economic Diversification Canada's Community Economic Adjustment Initiative (CEAI).

The initiative, which is part of the \$400 million Pacific Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Program (PFAR), was announced in January 1999. The CEAI funds projects, in BC's fishing dependent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, will address local adjustment priorities that have demonstrable community support and which result in strategic investments with positive long-term economic benefits in coastal communities. The federal program is delivered locally in recognition that communities themselves know their needs and opportunities best.

"The federal government is investing an additional \$7 million under the CEAI to help communities affected by the restructuring of the Pacific salmon fishery. This further funding raises total federal funding to \$25 million," Minister Dhaliwal said. "This investment will enable these communities to build on local and coast-wide opportunities to cope with challenges in their economy. It will also assist the Project Steering Committee in continuing their excellent work supporting locally-driven initiatives that will build greater self-sufficiency in BC's coastal communities."

To date, \$7.4 million has been invested in 24 coastal communities, many of which have been the hardest hit by the changes in the Pacific salmon fishery. Many of these communities are small remote Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities that were identified in the Ghislason Review Fishing Communities in Transition, released in January, 1999. The projects are the result of creative partnerships including band councils, community organizations and volunteers, the private sector and different levels of government.

"I am pleased at the level of success this program has achieved so far," Mr. Duhamel said. "This additional funding will provide opportunities for continued diversification in communities



Access B.C. Access B.C.

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• Analysis of the information you have gathered;



left to right - Herb Dhaliwal, Gillian Trumper, Ron J. Duhamel and Fred Tolme

along the coast of British Columbia. CEAI investments, to date, of \$7.4 million have generated more than \$27 million in local funding, proving that locally-driven solutions are working and supporting people who need the assistance the most."

Two of the CEAI Project Steering Committee Co-Chairs were also in attendance at the news conference.

"The inclusion of First Nations communities in the CEAI process has exceeded expectations," Fred Tolmie from the Tsimishan Tribal Council and Co-Chair of the CEAI Project Steering Commimttee said. "The hiring of CFDC outreach workers has been the key in assisting more remote First Nations communities complete proposals to access CEAI funds. Without this vital link, these communities would be unable to develop some of their project ideas, which are creating new opportunities in their communities."

The second Steering Committee Co-Chair, Gillian Trumper was equally enthusiastic about what the additional funding could do for coastal communities.

"By investing in basic infrastructure in some of the hardest hit communities in coastal British Columbia, the CEAI is enabling a lot of other projects to start up," Ms.Trumper, Mayor of the City of Port Alberni said. "These initial important investments encourage the establishment of other new businesses which will lead to long-term employment benefits."

In addition to the extra funding, the Ministers also announced the appointment of three new representatives to the independent Project Steering Committee that renders decisions on the CEAI. The committee consists of local representatives including the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), Aboriginal peoples, Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs), and the federal government. Anfinn Siwallace of the Oweekeno-Kitaso-Nuxalk Tribal Council, Don Scott, the Mayor of Prince Rupert, and Cathy Denham, Chair of the Mount Waddington CFDC, will fill three vacancies on the Committee.

CEAI funding applicants must demonstrate that their project is financially viable and has community support; helps diversify the local economy; has tangible and direct results such as job creation and employment enhancement; leads to sustainable development; and is not eligible for funding under an existing program.

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#### **Spring Tour 2000**

Rock stars aren't the only ones who tour the country – politicians often make the circuit as part of their jobs to keep in touch with what is happening in each region and take what they find out back to Ottawa.

So began Spring Tour 2000 – a western tour by Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification and la Francophonie, Ron J. Duhamel, which took Dr. Duhamel to Vancouver, Edmonton and Saskatoon during the week of April 17, 2000.

Dr. Duhamel kicked off his western tour in Vancouver on Monday, April 17, where he met with key opinion leaders and discussed with them how WD can serve and support western interests - an area of great importance to Dr. Duhamel.

During his visit Dr. Duhamel also discussed his vision for Western Canada and how he plans to refocus the direction of Western Economic Diversification Canada to meet these interests. He also wanted to hear from westerners as part of an ongoing process of consultation – getting the western viewpoint and "tapping the pulse" of B.C. stakeholders and interest groups to listen and learn – and then take those viewpoints back to Ottawa.

While in Vancouver, Dr. Duhamel appeared on the Rafe Mair radio morning show (CKNW). He also met with key business people at a Vancouver Board of Trade luncheon, announced, along with Fisheries and Oceans Minister Herb Dhaliwal, additional funding for community economic development in B.C.'s coastal communities under Western Economic Diversification Canada's Community Economic Adjustment Initiative (CEAI). Finally, he met with B.C.'s francophone community to discuss francophone resources in the province.

A busy time but well worth it. As a minister who holds the portfolio on Western Canada and as someone who understands Western Canada, he appreciated being able to hear concerns from western Canadians in order to promote their interests in Ottawa.

# Welcome To The World Of International Business!

Exporting is a whole new world to explore for a business. You hear about it on TV, you hear it on the radio; you see ads in magazines. Western Economic Diversification has seen an increase in interest via the higher volumes of phone calls, from demands for one-on-one counseling sessions, and increased attendance rates at the Ready for Export information sessions. So, as a business owner, if you wanted to explore whether this is feasible for your business, what is your first step? You need to identify with whom you are supposed to speak. Team Canada Inc. has set up a line to navigate you to the most appropriate sources of information via their 1-888-811-1119 line. If you are in Western Canada, you will be referred at some point to Western Economic Diversification (WD). We are one of your key sources of export assistance in the chain of international trade specialists. Our officers are there to assist you with your transition into the international marketplace.

Let us describe where we fit in the chain of export service providers. You can get preliminary help from the Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs). They are a fundamental stop for program information, market research and light diagnostics. Their officers will walk you through many of the processes in exporting and be a source of contacts for you in the trade arena. You can also employ the services of the International Trade Centres (ITCs) and the Posts abroad. Their role is to assist in the market entry, financing,

However, there is a lot of work to be done in the stages between information gathering and actual market entry. Western Economic Diversification's role in international trade is to help clients become export ready. Here are some of the services our officers will provide:

· Export and business counseling;

and support services abroad.

- · Deliver information sessions on export readiness;
- These are one day in length and provide an overview of export issues such as:
  - market research
  - developing an export plan
  - border brokerage
  - distribution
  - pricing
  - financing
  - marketing
- Assistance in your business' self diagnostics;

- Analysis of the information you have gathered;
- Evaluation of your business and marketing plans;
- Assistance in accessing international marketing and negotiating skills:
- Liaison coordination with other export specialists;
- Consultations in the development and implementation of market entry strategies;
- Awareness building on the concepts of logistics and distribution channels:
- Assistance in accessing information on legal and financial implications of doing business abroad; and
- Consultation on payment methods for receivables.

That is a lot to consider before going international! So, when you call WD, who are the officers who will help you through these steps? This dedicated group of officers is resident from British Columbia to Manitoba.

They have concentrated efforts in furthering businesses towards export readiness. WD officers' skill sets are diverse. They range from experience carrying out major international projects, to living abroad for extended periods of time, to growing an international career working in consulate offices abroad. All of the WD trade officers have formalized training gained from well-known universities and from Canada's trade training program, the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT). Many of our officers have attained domestic and international business professional credentials, for

example the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) and the Certified International Trade Professional (C.I.T.P.) designations, with another group of officers attaining designations in the very near future. Each member of the WD export team has an ongoing commitment toward continuous education in global business and service to clients.

Western Economic Diversification plays a very active role in helping you grow your export ventures. Our assistance extends to working with other Team Canada Inc. partners, such as the Canada Business Services Centres, the International Trade Centres, the Canadian Consulates and Embassies abroad, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Export Development Corporation, and many others. Our goal is to help you make a smooth transition from domestic to international markets. So, the next time you wonder who is on the other end of the phone at WD, rest assured that you are served by a group of dedicated, knowledgeable trade officers. Welcome to the world of international business. We look forward to working with you.

To reach us, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378)

If undeliverable, return to:

WD Edmonton Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4H7

### **Hiring Good Workers**

by Tamara Magnan

Hiring that 10th employee can be as nerve-racking as hiring the first. Based on how your past experiences have played out, maybe even more difficult. Although a perfect model for hiring does not exist, you can accentuate your possibilities for successfully hiring good employees.

It is important to know what you want your new employee to do. Writing a job description for the position will help you define it in your mind, and clearly describe it to a potential employee. As many positions change over time, it is acceptable to include "and all other duties as assigned" to encompass new and extenuating circumstances.

When reviewing résumés, it is important to keep in mind the responsibilities you desire in this new employee. Make sure the applicants you plan to interview have closely defined experiences to the position for which you are hiring.

Interviewing is a serious and important part of the hiring process. Like any business meeting, you should be prepared. List the information you want to know from each individual, which is pertinent to the job. Create a rating system. Rate interviewees on each item. This should make comparisons for the hiring process easier.

Interview techniques vary based on the interviewer's style. One important thing to remember is to try and stay as objective as possible. Don't allow the interviewee to take over the interview. Each interview will likely be different, based on the personality of the interviewee. But, it is important that you remain the director of the interview process.

#### Additional things to keep in mind:

If you are hiring for an entry-level position, you may want this person to be trained to do things in a very specific manner. If so,

attitude and desire to attend to duties as assigned may be very important qualities to look for during the interview process.

If this is your sole employee, it is likely you will need to relate to one another on a personal level. Don't confuse this with friendship. Personal level refers to being able to work with a person despite differences you may have. When you work with a person (especially only one person) for several hours a day, it is important to be able to resolve conflict quickly and successfully to maintain a healthy working relationship.

If this is your first employee, it may be hard for you to give up responsibility for jobs you have been doing. It is important to respect the differences you may have with the way this new person is doing things, e.g. envelopes are found next to the computer, not in your desk drawer as before. (Provided these are differences you can live with.)

It is important to remember, you are hiring someone to help you, not make you crazy.

Although this is an endless topic, we will close with one important recommendation. **Check references!** Past employers can give you a clearer understanding of this person you are planning to bring into your life. Some business owners swear by their instincts. And if that works for them, great! But making a decision based on a referral, can make that instinctive decision even stronger.

When hiring entry-level employees, they may not have a lot of work experience, thus job references may be few or none at all. For these individuals, it is appropriate to ask for references from teachers and supervisors from volunteer work they have done.

In the next issue of Access West, we will address handling disciplinary issues with employees.

#### 1-888-338-WEST (9378) www.wd.gc.ca

#### **British Columbia**

Suite 700, Price Waterhouse Bldg. 601 West Hastings Street Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5G9 (604) 666-6256

#### Alberta

Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, AB T5J 4H7 (780) 495-4164 Suite 400 Standard Life Building 639, 5th Avenue S.W. Calgary, AB T2P 0M9 (403) 292-5458

#### Saskatchewan

P.O. Box 2025 Suit 601, S.J. Cohen Bldg. 2nd Floor 119-4th Avenue South 1925 Rose Street

Saskatoon, SK S7K 3S7

#### Manitoba P.O. Box 777

Suite 712, The Cargill Bldg. 240 Graham Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3C 2I.4 (204) 983-0697



This newsletter is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada. If you would like to contribute to this publication or have any questions, please contact the editor, Johanna MacDonald at: Tel.: (780) 495-4320 Fax: (780) 495-6223 E-mail: access.west@wd.gc.ca Aussi disponible en français.





#### **Celebrating Entrepreneurial Innovation**



For the past 20 years, the end of October has had a special significance for small business owners across Canada. This is the time of year when the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, together with other sponsors, organize **Small Business Week.** 

This event began on a modest scale but with a lot of good will in British Columbia, and has paid tribute to entrepreneurship ever since. It now attracts tens of thousands of business people every year to events held in every region of Canada during Small Business Week - October 22-28, 2000.

In the early years, BDC branches in the lower Fraser valley were approached by the leaders of some small businesses and decided to pool their resources. In 1979, they organized information sessions about small business management under the theme Small Business Week. Although at the beginning the main reason these branches got together was to save money and optimize limited resources, it did not take them long to realize that they had put their finger on a remarkable phenomenon.

Small business leaders wanted everyone to realize how much economic weight they had, how many jobs they created, which products they developed and which new markets they were exploring. Above all, they wanted to tell people that small businesses were here to stay, and that their leaders were just as

determined, daring and innovative at the leaders of large companies.

Following their success in 1979, the British Columbia branches organized the 1980 Small Business Week and tripled the number of sessions offered to local entrepreneurs. They were so successful that the demand grew and in 1981, BDC organized a nationwide event with the support of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Since then, the BDC, in conjunction with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and local organizations, have organized trade fairs and shows, workshops, seminars, lunches, awards ceremonies and many other activities.

Every year, Small Business Week chooses a theme that focuses on the current problems facing small businesses. The theme this year is "Innovation" @SmallBusinessWeek2000. This year is designed to emphasize entrepreneurs' use of their innovative talents while putting them to good use to see their businesses thrive in an economic that is in a state of constant change.

For more information on Small Business Week activities in your area, contact the nearest BDC branch at 1-888-INFO-BDC (1-888-463-6232), check out the fall 2000 issue of Profit\$ magazine, or visit the local information section on their Web site at www.bdc.ca.







"I welcome the opportunity to include in each issue of Access West a column which allows me to share some of my thoughts on what the Department is currently involved with and some insight on its future undertakings," Ronald J. Duhamel, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification.

Technological advances have altered our economy at an unprecedented pace. E-business has already transformed the business world as we know it. And e-business is more than just the purchase and sale of products — it also means customer service and collaboration with trading partners. It goes beyond mere sales on the Internet — it corresponds with a new global vision for companies rather than an additional business activity.

Here in the West, I'm convinced that the winning competitive edge will go to businesses of all sizes that are prepared to take up the challenges of e-business.

The federal government is actively accelerating this transformation and our goal is to help capture 5% of the world share of e-business for Canada.

E-business is big business — and good business — no matter what the size of your business. Three University of Alberta graduates Val Pappes, Shane and Evan Chraplo started DocSpace several years ago. They worked long hours, paid themselves no salaries and took credit card cash advances to pay their assistants. Their efforts paid off. Earlier this year, the company which provides secure environment for file management, was bought by a Silicon Valley giant for \$850 million Canadian.

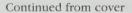
Canada's largest Internet marketplace, Canadashop.com, is also a success story from the West. Based in Edmonton, the Internet mall has grown from seven vendors to 70 in less than a year.

Recently, at an e-business conference in British Columbia, I had the pleasure of inviting businesses to submit Expressions of Interest under a new shared-cost

funding program called the **CANARIE E-business Virtual Clusters Program.** 

This competitive program is designed to assist small and medium sized enterprises improve their productivity and develop a strong competitive position in e-business. The \$10 million program will focus on projects that involve the creation of collaborations, or "virtual clusters", involving associated but geographically dispersed organizations that will undertake specific e-business development projects.

WD helped organize and also participated in a series of e-business seminars and conferences for small businesses in each of the four Western provinces. I had the opportunity to meet with many of those who are doing business on the net or who are interested in doing it. I am convinced that the West is well-positioned to take advantage of the opportunities offered by e-business to participate fully in a global knowledge-based economy. We must rise to this challenge. We have what it takes to succeed.



#### Celebrating Entreprenurial Innovation Young Entrepreneurs Award

For the twelfth consecutive year, BDC will reward Canadian young entrepreneurs of outstanding merit at the national launch of Small Business Week, which will take place this year in Ottawa on October 17. There is a Young Entrepreneur Award for each province and territory. Each winner will be matched for a full year with a prominent business leader under a mentor program. One of the award winners will also receive the Export Development Corporation's Export Achievement Award.

The BDC Young Entrepreneur Awards recognize the achievements of entrepreneurs **aged 30 years or younger**. The awards are given to 13 companies, one from each province and territory, during an awards ceremony.

Each BDC Young Entrepreneur Award winner will be recognized and applauded by the entire business community across Canada. Further, each winner will receive substantial help with the management and growth of their business by being matched with a business leader for a year-long mentoring relationship. Mentors act as guides and knowledgeable counsellors, helping the young entrepreneurs to broaden the scope of their business acumen and network of contacts.

Winners also receive a trophy and an all-expense paid trip to the awards ceremony.

### E-cruitment? It's Here, and Your Next Employee May Be Just a Click Away

by Quinn A.C. Nicholson

So, your business has begun to stabilize and satisfied customers are returning to your services. Profits are slowly climbing, your clientele is expanding, and your market awareness is growing. You feel that it's time to hire some new talent - but where to start?

While placing an ad in the newspaper or hanging a "Help Wanted" sign from your business' window may be all that is required to find a suitable candidate, it is very difficult to communicate your company's needs or expectations clearly or effectively in such a limited manner. Revising a page-long job description to fit a one-inch space of newsprint is a formidable task for even the most experienced editor! Furthermore, such hiring methods tend to attract all comers, so much time is lost weeding out the potential candidates from the rest of the field.

However, new methods of hiring are becoming available to those who know where to find them, and the Internet has become a literal beehive for potential workers. For many savvy businesses seeking the ideal job candidate, beginning the hiring process has become as simple as point-and-clicking a new recruit.

The advantages of **e-cruitment** or **Internet Hiring** are numerous:

- You can clarify your company's purpose, goals, and needs, so as to attract only qualified and interested candidates
- Fees, if applicable, are generally one-time-only for registration/access
- It provides an ongoing, customizable potential labour pool to draw from
- -There is little to no risk of wasting time with "obviously undesirable" candidates at both the contact and follow-up stages of hiring
- A preliminary interview or questioning process can be started by e-mail, at your convenience
- -The Internet's "Global Village" provides access to a much wider labour market than by conventional advertising means

Before advertising your job on the net, however, you most likely want to consider exactly how to accurately and effectively phrase the new job position. You may be hiring a new secretary, but is that a Financial Manager, a Human Resources Manager, a Purchasing Manager, or an Information Systems Manager that you're after? A good place to begin your job market research is at the Labour Market Information service, found at http://lmi-imt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/

#### Is Anybody Out There?

After you've determined the specifics for the position that you're advertising, it's time to get that information out on the

Internet. There are several ways of doing so. If you have a business Web site, you may want to post a "Join Our Team" type of link, but this is only really effective if your Web site has a high level of daily traffic. A better start might be to post to the Government of Canada job bank, which is located at <a href="http://jb-ge.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/">http://jb-ge.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/</a> and provides browsers with a listing of both student and professional jobs, organized by province, and searchable by job title, classification code, or description.

To post to the Job Bank, head over to the nearest government centre and complete a Job Order Form. Within 24 hours, your job will be on-line and accessible to anyone on the web. An even newer e-hiring site is the Electronic Labour Exchange at www.ele-spe.org/, an easy and intuitive on-line system that matches suitable candidates skills directly to company job postings, anonymously, and completely free of charge.

Another useful starting point is Chapter 5 of the Guide to Government of Canada Services and Support for Small Businesses, (available online at

http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc\_mangb/smeguide/) which lists and outlines all of the different human resources and internship programs sponsored by the federal government (links for contacting each individual program are also provided on-line). Such programs include the First Jobs in Science and Technology program, the International Trade Personnel Program, and the National Graduate Registry, among others. A number of Hire-a-Student programs also have or are in the process of creating on-line sites; you can contact your local government centre for more information about this program and how the local Hire-a-Student posts their job bank.

Still can't find the perfect employee? Several commercial Web sites allow you to post job descriptions and browse candidate resumes. Examples of just a few are: www.workopolis.com, www.activemploi.com, www.careermosaic.com, and www.positionwatch.com. However, prices for commercial Internet Recruitment services range from nothing to \$200, so be sure to consider just how wide your audience needs to be, and what kind of labour these services are best at targeting. As with all commercial Web sites, be careful to assess their authenticity and credibility before investing your money in their resources. Look for on-site contact information (phone or e-mail) so that you can ask questions and discuss your needs with the site's management.

#### An Eye on the Future

As technology continues to progress and the Internet becomes larger and faster, the e-cruitment trend will continue to grow and refine itself. Even if your company isn't currently in the process of hiring, it will likely be well worth your time to keep an eye on the Internet for the potential future employee. That winning resume could be just a click away.

#### Building the Bottom Line:

# Increasing Company

Profitability

You've diversified into three new fields, expanded your product line, and doubled your sales. Unfortunately, the only part of your business that isn't growing is your profit.

In fact, it is very easy for gross revenue to increase while net profit barely rises at all. So where is all the extra money going? And how can you get it back? Outlined below are 4 different areas you might want to consider if you have a profitability problem.

#### 1. Proper analysis of finances:

Value analysis is a method of increasing profitability by finding lower cost substitutes for materials or processes. To begin this process, you must first have a solid idea of where your company's finances are being spent.

Try the following:

- i) Break your product or service down into each of its component parts, and quantify the worth of that part, as assessed by your customer. Knowing the value of each part to the customer will help you to better identify value mismatches in what you are paying for that part, what you require, and what you are getting for your money.
- ii) If you market many different items, consider each product or service that you offer, and decide on an acceptable profitability margin for that item. Then decide on a time frame over which you will measure the profitability and sales trends of that item. If the item consistently fails to live up to the margin, it might be time to consider dropping it, or finding an alternative or replacement product or service.
- iii) Don't forget to take into account whether an item influences other products or services you are selling. While Item A may be a poor seller, it may be a necessary loss to maintain profitability of Item B.

Finally, check your sources for ways to decrease indirect and overhead expenses. Wholesalers often have a vested interest in promoting your business—after all, more business for you means more business for them. Many wholesalers offer different services for retailers, including product promotion, cooperative buying, service, and/or technical assistance, among others. Discuss with your wholesaler ways that they can help support and encourage your business.

by Quinn A.C. Nicholson

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#### 2. Access to current information sources

Having access to current information sources means more than just being hooked up to the

# Access Alberta

Small Business Week, October 22 – 28, 2000

Western Economic Diversification is proud to be a major sponsor of Small Business Week, again, this year in Edmonton and Calgary. Community leaders, along with business owners and promoters use this opportunity to celebrate the economic impact small business has on the national economy and the importance of entrepreneurship as a career choice.

Important elements of the week's activities are business seminar topics based on feedback received from previous attendees.

#### Session\* highlights:

#### Edmonton

Opening Event - Monday evening, keynote speaker, Evan Chrapko Alberta success story from Two Hills.

Breakfast for Success - Tuesday through Friday, speakers will present their success stories, each morning will have a new topic matter and speaker.

Seminar sessions\* are at the Library Theatre and Seminar Room (7 Sir Winston Churchill Square). Breakfast sessions\* will be held at the Westin Hotel (10135-100 Street).

For registration information or to receive a registration form, please contact Jennifer at (780) 426-4620 ext. 230, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, or go to the Web site www.sbw.edmonton.ab.ca.

#### Calgary

Each day's sessions\* have a central theme.

Monday - Starting a Business / Home-Based Business Day

Tuesday - Marketing / Advertising / Sales Day

Wednesday - International Business Day

Thursday - Financing Business / Human Resources Day

Friday - E-business Day

Participants can pay one low fee to attend an entire day of sessions. Value prices are as follows:

Attend the entire day of seminars:

Chamber of Commerce members - \$35

Non-members - \$40

Participants can also choose to attend single sessions and pay the reasonably low fee of:

Chamber of Commerce members - \$15

Non-members - \$20

To register for the Small Business Week 2000 Educational Seminars, call Mount Royal College ticketmaster at (403) 240-7770. For information regarding seminar content call the Mount Royal College Small Business Training Centre at (403) 240-5524.

This year's Small Business Week seminars promise to be the best ever. Five exciting and dynamic theme days have been planned. Organizers expect to break record attendance set last year with this exciting line up of seminars, so avoid disappointment and register early.

As Small Business Week is a national celebration, many cities and towns across Alberta will be celebrating locally. For activities occurring in your community, please contact your local Chamber of Commerce.

\*Sessions that do not meet minimum attendance requirements may be cancelled, and sessions do have maximum capacity limitations. Register early to reserve your seat.

#### Other events held in conjunction with Small Business Week: InReach: Rendez-vous

Canada Place

Main floor, 9700 Jasper Avenue

Edmonton

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, October 23 - 27

Are you interested in selling your products/services to federal government departments?

InReach: Rendez-vous, a tradeshow sponsored by the Government of Canada, gives small and medium-sized businesses the opportunity to promote their products/services at Canada Place (Edmonton). This event gives entrepreneurs a chance to meet with government purchasing officers in a cost- and time-efficient manner.

For further information, contact Noreen Gallagher at (780) 495-6434 or call toll-free 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

#### Open-house, The Business Link (Edmonton)

#100, 10237 - 104 Street

Edmonton

Wednesday, October 25 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#### Do you plan to be a business survior?

An entrepreneur needs to be innovative, develop and implement a strategic plan, make decisions and create alliances to survive in the business world. Attend The Business Link's Open House to find out what you need to be a business survivor.

For further information, contact Linda Chorney at (780) 422-7788 or call toll-free 1-800-272-9675.

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# Building the Bottom Line: Increasing Company Youth Entrepreneur is One Of



#### Interview with Travis Doherty, Founder of TerraDelta Corporation.

Questions and editing by Quinn A.C. Nicholson

In July of this year, it was my pleasure to interview (electronically, of course) a rising star in Alberta's e-business field. Hailing from Lethbridge, Alberta, 16-year old Travis Doherty divides his time between the worlds of high school academia and high-powered business. His growing company, **TerraDelta Corporation**, now does business locally and globally, boasting contracts on every major continent.

Not bad for a business that started out as a high school project.

#### Q: What specifically does your business do?

A: TerraDelta provides professional e-business solutions. Our main lines of business are web hosting and domain name registrations. We complete web development and consulting, along with custom software development. Our goal is to stay with our customer and help them to grow, the larger our customers are the higher our customer base quality is.

#### Q: How long have you been involved with computers?

- **A:** Personally, I have been involved for over four years. I picked up on things in September of 1996, and started programming commercially by July of 1997. My first Internet sale was made in June of 1998, and from there the business has grown to where it is today.
- Q: What sparked your interest in computers and e-business? When and why did you begin to see a business potential with computers?
- **A:** A computer was brought to me on loan from a family friend; from that point, I gained great interest in 'the thing' as it was then known. The 'thing' seemed to be able to complete work for me far faster than I could.

The e-business idea was sparked from a combination of Internet access at a friend's house and my childhood of always trying to sell things. I can remember times where I would 'pretend' to run a business selling hockey cards, one of my hobbies back then. I was always trying to make an honest dollar, or penny in those years.

In my early teens, the introduction of the Internet leveled the playing field. So even though I was only a teenager, I could compete with a multi-million dollar company. I decided things looked like they could work out, I had nothing to lose but time (which I had a lot of back then) and a few dollars a month in Internet fees.

#### Q: What are your thoughts about e-business and the changing face of the business world?

A: The Internet and e-business front is changing the face of business and industry to an extent comparable to the industrial revolution. Extreme changes are being seen in every aspect of the commercial and industrial worlds. Changes can even be seen in everyday social life. Changes to this degree are forcing businesses to pioneer their industry on the Internet as a method of making themselves an industry leader.

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Having access to current information sources means more than just being hooked up to the

### lberta's E-business Rising Stars



- Q: Where did you find the support to start forming your business? How did the local Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) help contribute to creating and sustaining your business?
- A: The Business Development Bank of Canada, BDC, offered a Youth Business Loans Program which gave me the help I needed to get things rolling. From there the business grew and I was able to pay the loan off. Eventually, I decided it was time to go big or go home. The choice to go big was made. Employees were hired and the business was moved into downtown offices. Current capital was quickly exhausted with all of the changes while accounts receivable were not being collected very well.

Capital was realized through the Lethbridge and District Community Futures Development Corporation, which allowed us to pull through the final stages of this growth and carry through with the business and collect much of the outstanding accounts receivable. Help was mostly from the CFDC, with some from the BDC at the start. The local CFDC gave a loan of \$20,000.

- Q: Who do you think CFDCs can help the most in your community?
- **A:** The CFDCs can help any business get started and many others grow in size. The CFDC is a key component in the community; Lethbridge has a very high-tech and rapidly growing commercial sector. Much of this would not be possible without the existence of our local CFDC and its employees.
- Q: What main challenges have you come across with using e-business for your enterprise?
- **A:** Our enterprise is an e-business enterprise, the structure of our business was formed around e-business. Many businesses form around a "bricks-and-mortar" structure already in existence, which doesn't allow the hierarchy required for a complete e-business implementation. In

our case, there were no bricks-and-mortar to form around, and therefore the primary challenge that most businesses face never really crossed our path. The main problem we had (and are still having, though not nearly to the same degree) is collecting on accounts. Many people do not feel they should pay a business that they have never seen, and often times disappear without paying for the services they have used. This is still a problem, although we have cut back on it about 90 % by implementing a few specialized solutions.

- Q: What advice do you have for future entrepreneurs who would like to follow in your footsteps?
- **A:** Wear the right shoes. If you don't come to the market prepared, you're going to get your feet burned. Trial and error can work when used at the right time and place the e-business frontier is not a good place to get started using that method.

You need to do a lot of research on your competitors and potential customers when you are considering a local market; when on the Internet, your potential market is now anyone in the world, and you are competing with everyone else in the world. Extensive research is required to succeed. Expect to spend most of your time learning the industry, and keeping up with it – it changes every second of every day, or, as we count time in my industry, every millisecond.

- Q: Where do you see TerraDelta in 5 years? 10 years?
- A: Being a customer-oriented business this is an extremely hard question to answer. If our web-hosting customers start to demand that they can have servers in their own home and run them via their own high-speed Internet connection, we will be there to provide the hardware, software, and support for them to do it. If they decide they want their fridge to keep inventory and order their groceries, we'll be there to program the software to run the system.

Our main goals, which we uphold and will continue to uphold, are the reliability of our customer support and the quality of our products and services. These are key points to surviving on the Internet where anyone can compete. On-line customers will often disregard small price differences and base purchasing decisions solely on quality.

# Building the Bottom Line: Increasing Company New Study Aligns Quality of Life with the Values of Alberta Households



Western Economic Diversification (WD) and the Pembina Institute's Green Economic team have piloted an ambitious research and development project to establish indicators and measure the genuine well-being and sustainability of the values Albertans consider most important to the quality of their lives.

Measuring intangibles has been a plight of the '90s, e.g. how to value intellectual property and performance measures. The importance of measuring intangibles is accepted. It's the manner in which indicators are measured and reported to stakeholders that is challenging, both for accountants (the measurement scientists) and business people (who need to quantify the importance of their intangible activities).

This challenge of valuing intangibles continues as business and government move toward building frameworks to measure progress in societal and environmental terms as well as economic terms.

Traditional measures of economic progress, like the GDP (gross domestic product), simply consider the monetary transactions in our economy. The GDP tells us little about the genuine well-being of our households or of nature. For example, environmental and social costs, such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Montreal ice storm, and building more prisons, actually contribute to a rise in GDP as money changes hands. Environmental and social costs are ignored in the GDP, as is the depreciation costs of depleting oil, gas and forest resources. As Robert Kennedy once remarked, 'The GDP measures everything except that which makes life worthwhile."

Once values are assigned to quality of life issues, indicators will measure how Albertans rank each in terms of importance, and monitor changes in ranking as they occur.

As with traditional accounting functions, there is an element of assets vs. liabilities. These Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) accounts will create a set of "economic books" to show the monetary value of Alberta's most important assets and liabilities along with an analysis of the full costs and benefits associated with those values that make life worthwhile.

Through this initiative, WD and the Pembina Institute expect to advance previous measurements to a new level by constructing a balance sheet and income statement for human, social, environmental and economic, or produced capital (wealth). "For example, we plan to examine a wide range of factors that contribute to or detract from the well-being of individuals, society and the environment. Such things as the value of volunteer time, the costs of crime, family breakdown, sustainable forest use and air pollution are currently ignored in the provincial GDP figures," says Mark Anielski, Director of the Pembina Institute's Green Economics Program.

The project team's goal is to develop a system of accounting for sustainability and quality of life that aligns with the values of Alberta households and is consistent with how people experience life. The result of this project will be a set of GPI accounts for Alberta that will show the overall "state" (in terms of physical and monetary aspects) of our human, social, environmental (natural) and produced (built, financial) capital.

WD expects this pilot project to be the precursor to broader initiatives that measure "genuine progress," throughout the Western region and across the country. Access Alberta will keep readers informed as this project develops.

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### 2. Access to current information sources

Having access to current information sources means more than just being hooked up to the Internet. You need to examine what exactly your company requires to maintain the most up-to-date information about whatever product or service you sell. Information is THE competitive edge in today's market.

Computers can reduce labor (not to mention material) costs in storage, printing, accounting and research. You not only want to maintain a current inventory and purchasing database, but also an up to date client list that can help tell you who's purchasing what, when they're going to need more, and how to contact them if the need arises. A customer will be far more likely to be drawn to your store if she knows that rare printer ribbon will be in stock whenever she walks in. People will always be willing to pay a little more if they don't have to wait for something.

Keeping up to date on information, techniques, and pricing can be a preventative measure too. Think about the last time that your company was blindsided by some unexpected expense, an expense that knocked a large chunk out of your bottom line. What caused that expense? Could it have been prevented if you had the proper instructions, or the right connections to deal with it? If the same problem arose in the future, would you be equally susceptible to it?

## 3. Be careful where you cut costs

Indirect or overhead costs are usually the first target for profit-increasing cost cutting, since they don't pertain directly to the finished product. Some examples include lighting, office supplies, and telephone usage. **Beware of potentially short-sighted cost-cutting measures like these.** What many employers forget is that such cost-cutting often inconveniences the people responsible for the product, ie: the employee, which can lower morale and hurt productivity.

A happy employee is a more efficient and effective employee, and is motivated to promote your product or service both inside and outside of the work environment. An unhappy employee is going to be saying things about the company, whether true or false, that you don't want potential customers to hear. While you may need to cut business luxuries, be sure that you're skimming off fat, not trimming down muscle. Above all, discuss potential cutting with your employees first. Then, at the very least, you can make them aware of the reasons for such cuts.

Note: It is almost always more advisable to instead focus on win-win budget trimming, such as improving labour efficiency to reduce work hours. Most business formulae only allow for a reduction in indirect expenses of 1-2% to increase profitability; sales can be continually increased, but overhead cannot be continually cut.

## 4. Ensure customer loyalty

Perhaps the easiest and most efficient way of increasing profitability. Every manager knows the "It takes 12 good impressions to counter a bad one" maxim, but many don't realize the little details that can annoy customers and make them less inclined to purchase from you a second time.

It is extremely important to maintain good communications with customers at all times. If a product is shipping late, or there are complications, let your customer know. While it may be that nobody might have noticed the delay had you not contacted them, if they did notice it, they're going to be angry at coming to your store and not getting what they're paying for.

**Don't hide behind company policy.** If your company has a policy, there should be a good reason for the policy, and it should be a reason that you can explain to the customer. It is frustrating for a customer to hear: "We can't do that sir/madam. It's company policy." You're effectively saying: "We don't do that, and we're not telling you why."

These are just a few potential methods for increasing your company's profitability. For further information, we encourage you to contact your local Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) or Canadian Business Service Centre (CBSC), available at over 100 locations throughout Western Canada. You can also get in touch with the specific expertise of Western Economic Diversification's highly trained professionals by phone at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or on the Web at www.wd.gc.ca

# Dealing With Unacceptable Employee Behaviour



Successfully dealing with unacceptable employee behaviour is an important element of running your business. Dealing with the situation quickly and fairly will increase the chance of successful resolution.

When discussing the behaviour you want an employee to alter, discontinue or adopt, be specific. You cannot assume the employee is aware of your frustration. For example, your receptionist is habitually late. This is a behaviour you as an employer cannot tolerate, because your published hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It is imperative that your employee understands how important it is that your customers know they can reach a representative from your company during those hours.

You cannot assume the employee knows you consider this behaviour unacceptable. Here's why: As the old adage goes, "Actions speak louder than words." When this employee arrives at 8:42 a.m. (and you know this because you're calculating every second), you are sitting at the reception desk prepared to

answer the phone calls. S/he runs in saying, "Sorry I'm late," and you say, "It's okay, anything major happen?" The employee replies, "No, nothing major."

You begin to feel angry. So, you walk to your office and shut the door. In your mind you are reminiscing the interview with this employee. You specifically remember the conversation about the importance of timeliness in this position. How could s/he have forgotten that? Then, once you have calmed down you open your door and try to pretend nothing happened.

Actions speak louder than words: Your action of covering for this employee when it was his/her responsibility to be there, says to the employee, "It's okay to be a few minutes late, my boss will cover for me."

One recommended option for dealing with a situation like this is: Set a time to speak with the employee as soon as possible after the occurrence. Ideally, deal with it immediately or as soon as possible. **Do not** delay speaking with the employee

about this matter. Allowing too much time to pass may allow your frustration to subside, but when the situation re-occurs, your anger may actually heighten. This does not create a positive working relationship.

You need to find out why this employee is having trouble making it to work on time. If you are new at dealing with disciplinary issues with employees, you may feel like you are prying. You are not prying. It is your right to know what an employee is doing when s/he is or should be working.

Remember: There may be a legitimate reason for the habitual tardiness. However, if being at work by 8:30 a.m., ready to work, is a requirement of the position, this is an issue you will have to work out. If the tardiness is due to waking up late, etc., excuses are unacceptable and MUST be remedied.

If you have not managed people before, it would be extremely beneficial for you to enroll in a "How to manage people" seminar or course. If you have managed people, you may be wondering why you didn't seem to have trouble managing them at your old job, but now it seems to be different. The important thing to remember is that **you as the boss** is very different than **you as the owner**. Even loyal employees (as you may have been) do not have the same commitment as the person who you are now with much more to gain or lose in this business venture.

In most major cities, there are human resource consultants who specialize in helping companies manage employees and human resource processes. For specific advice on this issue, you may wish to contact a specialist in your area.

Other problems with employees, such as motivational problems and lack of attention to detail, may be due to underlying problems or frustrations. In order to uncover these problems or frustrations, you need to communicate with your employee. As in the interview, ask open-ended questions, not ones that are easily answered with a "yes" or "no." Remember: You have a right to know and understand why a person is not doing their job at an acceptable level.

You also have a responsibility to be completely honest with your employee. If you tell s/he that your conversation is in strict confidence, you MUST keep your word. By maintaining their respect, you are more likely to win their loyalty. Relationships are built on trust. And just as you need to trust your employee, s/he needs to trust you.

When speaking with an employee about unacceptable behaviour, you must be genuinely concerned and confident this relationship can continue. If you do not believe the working relationship can be salvaged, it is very likely that your employee will recognize your lack of commitment. If this happens, you have not gained anything. In fact, your employee may have even less commitment to improving the bad behaviour, at your productivity expense.

If the employee is unaware his/her behaviour is unacceptable, together you can outline what behaviour, attitude, etc. must be changed and how the employee plans to bring the behaviour to an acceptable level over a realistic time period.

If an employee is aware of his/her behaviour and wants to work at correcting it, set measurable boundaries and milestones. For example, the employee mentioned above says, "I know I have been tardy a few times. But since you didn't say anything, I thought you didn't mind answering the phones for 10-15 minutes in the morning." You will need to make it clear that you answering the phone is not the issue. The issue is that the employee is not meeting a minimum job requirement (based on the reasons mentioned above).

Once you have spoken with the employee and documented the desired and required behaviour. Review progress regularly. Celebrate goals reached.

For habitually unacceptable behaviour, termination may be the only solution. Since you have documented the desired behaviour with timelines and predetermined retribution, you make the disciplinary process fair and the employee accountable for his/her actions.

Documentation of progress and regress are extremely important. Remember: Document positive and negative milestones. Keeping track through written records will help you remember the details of events. In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to terminate the employee, these records become official documentation.

Most instances where unacceptable behaviour has been dealt with properly and fairly result in a positive employer-employee relationship. And, that's a real benefit to your customers and your business.

Please note: These tips do not apply to an employee who has committed an illegal activity.



If undeliverable, return to:

WD Edmonton Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4H7

# To E or not to E

E-business has been the buzz everywhere over the last few months, and Western Economic Diversification (WD) is no exception.

Throughout the last quarter, lots of effort and excitement went into hosting Roundtable Meetings in each province, publishing the Western Canada research that WD commissioned, as well as the work underway on a full e-business strategy. The WD Web team has been working hard over the last few weeks to bring together information and content for the Web site that supports WD's work in the area of e-business. A new e-business section has been created on the WD web site with a starting line-up that includes:

- Research undertaken by KPMG on behalf of WD, as well as a link to the Boston Group Report, "Fast Forward".
- An **e-video** presentation by Ron J. Duhamel, the Secretary of State, for Western Economic Diversification, discussing Western Canada's role in the new economy.
- A section with links to external sites that cover a wide variety of e-business topics, including Assessment Tools and Tutorials, Registering a Domain Name, as well as Security and Trust.

Check out this section online at <a href="http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/default.htm">http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/default.htm</a> <a href="http://www.wd.gc.ca/fra/default.htm">http://www.wd.gc.ca/fra/default.htm</a>

Work is underway to add e-business information such as...

- E-business **Frequently Asked Questions** are currently under development with guidance from a number of client service officers, to assist businesses who have some basic questions about e-business and what it means for them.
- A What's New section will be added to the site to highlight some of the events, news articles, program announcements that are of interest to the business community in Western Canada.
- We want to explore the potential of an **e-newsletter** to communicate with businesses and others regarding issues, challenges and information re: e-business in the West.

Although we are at an early stage in developing this portion of

the site, it will continue to grow and evolve as WD becomes further involved in supporting and encouraging the development of e-business in Western Canada.

We would appreciate any feedback, suggestions or ideas that you might have to help us make the Web site a more useful tool to assist you in running your business. Please feel free to forward it directly to deb.hogg@wd.gc.ca or call at (306) 975-5944.

## DID You Know?

Access West is available on our Web site in a .pdf format at http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/mediacentre/default.htm.

Scroll down until you see the Access West title and click on the edition you are interested in, then click on either the main portion or regional inserts from each of the four western provinces, whichever you would like to read.

We are developing an online database of readers who would like to receive an e-mail notice as each new edition is posted to the Web site. The .pdf file will not be sent to you, only the notice as to where it can be accessed. Readers can download a hardcopy to your own computer, or read the articles from your monitor at your convenience.

If you would like to receive an e-mail notice each issue, please fill out the form posted at the posted Web address. Your name and e-mail address will be added to our system. You will be notified when each issue is posted.

Also, if you are receiving the printed version and you would only like the electronic notice please check the box "please remove my name and address from receiving a printed version". We will automatically remove your business address from our printed version mailing address. Please be sure to fill out the blank sections asking for your mailing address so we will be able to locate your information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at access.west@wd.gc.ca or by call Johanna MacDonald at (780) 495-4320.

## 1-888-338-WEST (9378) www.wd.gc.ca

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### Manitoba

P.O. Box 777 Suite 712, The Cargill Bldg. 240 Graham Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3C 2L4 (204) 983-0697







# A New Strategy for

# Sustaining Western Canada's Future

the Government of Canada has made sustainable development (SD) a national goal and is taking action to ensure that Canadians can enjoy environmental, social and economic security now and in the future. Sustainable development is a way of recognizing that social, environmental and economic issues are interrelated and interdependent.

In May 2000, the Commission of the Environment and Sustainable Development released a report evaluating the performance of the sustainable development strategies of the 28 federal departments. In his report, the Commissioner highlighted key weaknesses in the management of environmental and SD issues and management practices required to implement SD principles.

Western Economic Diversification's (WD) Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) 2000 took into consideration these weaknesses, as well as the evaluation results of the Department's 1997 SDS. The 1997 strategy evaluation indicated that while WD had contributed to a number of SD projects, it needed to build SD practices into its daily business operations. In addition, the Department needed to demonstrate progress with measurable outcomes. These concerns have been addressed in the WD SDS 2000.

The WD SDS 2000 contains three main goals for the Department:

1. To facilitate the integration of sustainable development in the business practices of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Western Canada through our network partners;

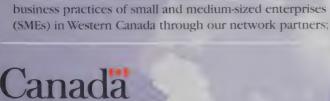
- 2. To integrate sustainable development into the programs, services and activities that we deliver directly and in partnership; and
- 3. To foster a sustainable development culture within WD.

As a regional department that advances economic development in the western provinces, WD is positioned to enhance Western Canada's progress towards sustainable development within government and business.

Future generations have the right to a quality of life equal to that of today's generation. In order to achieve this objective, Western Economic Diversification embraces the concept of sustainable development and is working to integrate it into all aspects of its decision-making. For WD, this means sustainable development is achieved when full consideration is given to economic development, the preservation of the environment and the social well-being of Canadians.

The WD SDS 2000 includes an environmental performance measurement framework (PMF) that outlines how the Department will review, monitor and evaluate the achievement of the outlined goals and objectives. The PMF includes the collection of baseline data (where WD is beginning) and provides for regular reporting on performance to employees, stakeholders and the public.

For more information, or a copy of the WD SDS 2000, please contact Cynthia Hyslop - WD Headquarters at (780) 495-8384 or by e-mail: Cynthia. Hyslop@wd.gc.ca.





"I welcome the opportunity to include in each issue of Access West a column which allows me to share some of my thoughts on what the Department is currently involved with and some insight on its future undertakings," Ronald J. Duhamel, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification.



# Add an "E" to Small Business

mall businesses make a giant contribution to Canada's economy. In fact, they're responsible for creating nearly 80 per cent of all new jobs across the country.

My department, Western Economic Diversification Canada, is a one-stop source of business information and services for entrepreneurs in the four western provinces. We're here to help and this year we also encourage you to talk to us about the challenges and opportunities of e-business. The Canadian share of the Internet economy is poised to grow to \$155 billion and could create 180,000 incremental jobs by 2003.

We recently commissioned a study of what business in the West will be like in 2004. Over and over, Western entrepreneurs described their vision of a West where e-business and Internet technology had become indispensable to prosperity. Working together, we can help you put your business on line and ensure that western Canadians share in the benefits of the new economy. The future is here and you can be part of it.

# Access West Gets New Editors During Take Your Kid to Work Day

ovember 1st marked the start of Canada Career Week. This national event is celebrated annually in over 1,500 communities across the country. Canada Career Week highlights the importance of career planning and making informed decisions in a rapidly changing labour market. In celebration of the week, activities are held to help promote career awareness and provide opportunities for people to explore the world of work and discover career options.

During Canada Career Week, grade nine students across Canada are encouraged to accompany a parent, guardian or other role model to their workplace. This one-day event -Take Your Kid To Work Day - provides students with the opportunity to gain

exposure to the world of work, gain respect for the contributions people make and to strengthen the bonds among parents, students and the community.

Western Economic Diversification's Edmonton office hosted five grade nine students on November 1, 2000, for Take Your Kid To Work Day. One of their challenges was to decide the content and layout for this issue of Access West. They did a terrific job and can be very proud of their issue.

Congratulations and thank you to Pamela, Athena, Aaron, Hilary and Jordan. Here are some of their comments they wrote on the day's activities.



We're hard at work making the January issue of the Access West newsletter. Left to right: Athena Bush, Hilary Kirkpatrick, Pam McCumber, Aaron Tabin and Jordan Levensconte.

Aaron and Jordan learn of some cool new Web sites and learn about advanced Internet search techniques.



Pamela McCumber, D.S. MacKenzie High School

"For the first time in my life, I got to experience what it's like to be at work. We started the day with an introduction meeting to get to know each other and learn more about WD. After the introduction, we got to work. We organized the Access West January–March issue. After an hour of hard work, three Co-op students took us for a coffee break. We spent an hour with Maurice Brunelle on the computer. I would say that was probably the most interesting time of the day. In the afternoon, we went on site visits to learn about the Edmonton Flying Club and Atco Frontecs. At the very end of the day, we spent more time putting together Access West. Although I had fun today, I would rather be a veterinarian."

#### Aaron Tabin, Vimy Ridge Academy

"As part of this day, I was asked to contribute to this newsletter. The biggest challenge was to reach a consensus on which stories made the cut and which ones took the boot. When considering the Aboriginal article, it was originally dismissed, but after careful review I learned that an article like this has never been published in this newsletter. In my opinion, diversity is the thing that brings us together as Canadians."

Here we are checking out the planes at the Edmonton Flying Club at the Municipal Airport.

Athena Bush, H.E.B. Catholic Junior High School

"I'm not going to forget today. It has been really tiring – it's been very real! I have more respect for my family and friends who work full-time jobs. This experience was good and I am thinking about a government job. People here are so kind, they have provided me with a useful learning experience."

Hilary Kirkpatrick, Hardisty Junior High School

"I got to my dad's work today around 8:30 a.m. and the first thing we did was have chocolate milk and doughnuts, then we got straight to work. Along with four other grade nine students, we put together Access West, figured out what articles should be put in it and then we went on the Internet. Although I had fun being an editorial person, I want to be a fashion designer or lawyer when I get older."

For more information about career learning and employment planning, check out the **Youth Resource Network of Canada** Web site at **www.youth.gc.ca**. This site is designed and managed by youth, and is an initiative of the Youth Employment Strategy of the Government of Canada and its partners. The site helps prepare youth for a career with the help from a group of existing programs and services. It offers a multitude of information on the employment world, such as the choice of careers, training and education, jobs offers, and links to provincial government career development centres.



## **Another Location Choice for New Small Businesses**

or many individuals considering starting a small business the high costs of renting a location can stop them before they ever get started. One option for new, small businesses is to be home-based, but this has its drawbacks too. While usually more affordable, the lack of traffic and image portrayed by being home-based can reduce sales so much that it is not a viable option. There is, however, one other option – partner with other complementary small businesses under one roof, usually referred to as a business incubator.

The idea can work very well for many types of business, from retail, to commercial, to light industrial. The main idea of the incubator is to provide affordable rent, but also a more professional image, better location and many features that you wouldn't be able to afford if located alone. Typically, once the new business has an improved cashflow, they will move out to larger facilities, opening up space for other new businesses in the incubator.

Many incubators share the following resources:

- Central reception and receptionist and/or cash desk and cashier
- One phone system
- · A photocopier
- · A fax machine
- Washrooms
- Meeting room(s)

The interior is set up usually with free-standing walls or partitions that can be moved to accommodate the needs of each new tenant. Rent is usually charged on the basis of square-footage occupied.

When located in an incubator the benefits gained go beyond sharing expenses and an enhanced image. It gives the new business owner a "place" to go to work. One of the drawbacks of being home-based can be separating work and personal life, such as being distracted by the dishes, the housework OR always working because it is right there. Having a location out of the house forces the business to have more structure, usually forcing the owner to take the business more seriously. Another benefit is not working entirely alone. There may even be a possibility of sharing other resources with the other businesses in the incubator, such as: helping to handle sales calls when one person is out of the office, or answering customer questions that voice mail could never do!

Of course, the downside to an incubator is the fact that you probably won't be able to stay there forever, so you may have an added expense of moving at some point. But the fact that the business was more likely able to establish itself more quickly should offset this expense. The only other problem with incubators is that in reality there are not many of them. However, there is nothing stopping new businesses from joining together and forming their own "incubator" of sorts.

If you are unsure of where to start to find other new businesses that may need an incubator, there are several places to look. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce and tell them your needs, check with your local real estate office, your local commercial bank manager, attend courses targeted at new small businesses or contact the Canada Business Service Centre in your area.

# Research - A Wise Investment

esearching a new business is the most important

competitors and government, always include questions about

# Access Alberta

# WD's Commitment to Sustainable Development

Throughout the 1990s, Canadians have come to realize the importance of balancing economic growth with environmental and social sustainability. Especially in Western Canada, we have come to realize that our traditional resource industries are finite. While these industries have afforded us a healthy economic growth, they have also been identified as environmental and social risks.

Natural resource industries have worked hard to deal with issues such as pollution and erosion. They have worked with advocacy groups to monitor progress and keep the public informed on environmental developments.

While issues of sustainable development span nationally and internationally, it is important for us as western Canadians to remember we play a major part in shaping the environment we leave for future generations.

At Western Economic Diversification (WD), a sustainable development strategy is coming to fruition. Lead by the Deputy Minister, Oryssia Lennie, and managed by members of the executive committee, the strategy framework has

been developed. The strategy, which will soon be released as a publication, identifies performance measures and targets to monitor progress and review methodology.

WD is putting its sustainable development strategy into action. As with all buildings that are 15 years or older, the offices at Canada Place are starting to need upgrading and minor renovations. WD has committed to be a pilot project for the federal government, incorporating new and innovative sustainable technologies into its refit plans.

WD is working in partnership with Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) to implement this sustainable development model. PWGSC is assisting WD to meet the requirements of this leadership role.

WD is currently finalizing its refit plans. Built into these plans are many of the latest ideas and concepts in office design and construction, including a comprehensive assessment of such things as walls, doors and furniture. Every practical idea is being considered. In some cases, we will be looking at the installation of mobile walls to allow future changes to be considered in a cost-effective manner. Early discussions indicate the potential and suggest the reuse of many existing set-ups (i.e. doors), with existing furniture refurbished.

This is a true example of how WD is committed to making sustainable development a reality.

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# **Upcoming Events**

## **Aboriginal Youth Fair\***

February 6, 2001 Shaw Conference Centre, 9797 Jasper Avenue Edmonton Time: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

This event is part of a nation-wide series of career fairs for Aboriginal students. Exhibitors and speakers will provide information on the wide range and diverse careers available.

For further information, please contact Philip Ducharme at (416) 926-0775 or toll-free at 1-800-329-9780.

## Alberta Native Friendship Centre Association Fourth Bi-annual Funding and Information Conference

February 14-16, 2001 Ramada Conference Centre, 11834 Kingsway Avenue Edmonton

Conference fee: \$275

The Alberta Native Friendship Centre Association hosts this bi-annual funding and information conference to provide Aboriginal organizations and individuals with a forum to increase their knowledge on topics, such as: justice, health, economic development, Aboriginal investment, marketing and public relations.

To request a conference package or for further information, please contact the Alberta Native Friendship Centre Association at (780) 423-3138 or visit their Web site: www.nativecentres.org.

## **Alberta Awards of Distinction**

February 27, 2001 Shaw Conference Centre, 9797 Jasper Avenue Edmonton Tickets: \$125/person or \$900/table of 8

Time: 6:00 p.m. champagne reception; 7:00 p.m. dinner and awards

Alberta Chambers of Commerce host their 10th annual awards ceremony. This event honours Alberta businesses and the vital role they play in the province's economic prosperity.

To order tickets or for further information, please contact Teresa Pollock at (780) 425-4180, ext. 4 or 1-800-272-8854, ext. 4.

### National Aboriginal Achievement Awards\*

March 16, 2001 Jubilee Auditorium, 11455 – 87 Avenue Edmonton Tickets: \$300, \$250 tax receipt issued upon request Time: 8:00 p.m.

This nationally televised awards ceremony recognizes Aboriginal achievement in all career areas, including: arts, business, law and public service.

To order tickets or for further information, please contact Philip Ducharme at (416) 926-0775 or toll-free at 1-800-329-9780.

\*The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation organizes the Aboriginal Youth Fair and National Aboriginal Awards. This non-profit organization promotes career opportunities to Aboriginal students. They host career fairs and speaker workshops to introduce and encourage youth to explore the many career opportunities available. They also recognize Aboriginals who have contributed and achieved much in their careers at an annual awards ceremony. For further information on the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation and its programs, please contact Philip Ducharme at (416) 926-0775 or toll-free at 1-800-329-9780.

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So go ahead and make that investment. But make it a wise investment by first doing the research and making sure it will truly be the business of your dreams!



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# Research - A Wise Investment

Researching a new business is the most important aspect of business start-up. Doing research can save time and money, as well as lots of frustration. Before investing money, invest your time. Find out if the idea is really viable. Your research will tell you this, along with the sales and financial projections you create from the research.

The first step of research is often the most difficult – knowing where to start looking for information. One of the most helpful sources is usually someone else who has done, or is doing, the same thing. Many people will dismiss this source, as they feel their competition will not want to talk with them. While sometimes this is true, many successful entrepreneurs want to share the difficulties they have come upon. Some may even welcome new competition into the marketplace. Choosing a competitor that is a distance away, but has a similar consumer base, will likely be the most helpful.

Another place to start sourcing information for many businesses is the government. You will want to make sure that there are no regulations prohibiting you from operating your business the way you are intending to operate. Be sure to check all orders of government (federal, provincial and municipal). The type of business you are planning on opening will determine with which government agencies you may need to speak. This is where someone who is already in the business will likely be able to help you the most. Often many new businesses find out too late that they are required to set things up according to health or safety regulations, and then end up spending many dollars that were not in the budget. This can jeopardize the business' success by using up cash that was earmarked for other areas, such as advertising and promotion, or was intended to cover operating expenses in the first few months.

The third area to research is costs. Determine what are all of the costs associated with the type of business you are interested in? Be sure to include EVERYTHING! Include: insurance (liability, fire theft, disability, etc.), hook-up costs, security deposits, renovation costs (be sure to always get three estimates and use the highest one in your forecasting, even if you go with a lower one) and phone (including: cell phone, Internet costs, yellow pages and other phone features that may cost extra). If you are hiring employees, include costs for your share of their government deductions. Don't forget things like bank charges, interest on loans and credit cards, licences, fees, permits, lawyers, accountants, consultants or things like meals and travel costs when doing research.

Another area to research is your customer, and this shouldn't necessarily be your last area to research, because without proof of a viable customer base, the rest of the information you research is useless! When doing your initial contacts with

competitors and government, always include questions about your potential customers. Ultimately you will need to observe and contact potential customers to verify that all the other data you received from secondary sources is indeed accurate. A survey is often the most effective way to achieve this. This information will be the basis for your sales estimates.

So go ahead and make that investment. But make it a wise investment by first doing the research and making sure it will truly be the business of your dreams!

# Partners in Business ALBERTA 2001

a Chambre économique de l'Alberta (La CÉA) is organizing the first-ever provincial Francophone economic development conference - *Partners in Business* - to be held in Edmonton on March 2 & 3, 2001. This conference will provide Francophone entrepreneurs across Western Canada, with valuable business opportunities.

Partners in Business will promote the sustainable development of minority-language communities by providing western entrepreneurs with a venue to forge new partnerships with other entrepreneurs, business leaders and government representatives. It will facilitate access to programs and services offered by federal organizations, make them more visible and allow federal representatives to assess what Francophone entrepreneurs require in terms of services and programming.

The opening sessions on March 2nd at La Cité Francophone, Edmonton's Francophone cultural and community centre, will provide participants with an opportunity to network with other entrepreneurs, members of the community and government representatives.

The formal conference will begin on Saturday, March 3rd, at the Ramada Inn Conference Centre. The conference program will feature presentations by government and business leaders on the Francophone tourism potential of Western Canada and Alberta's provincial economic development strategies.

Workshops will be held throughout the day and will cover such topics as the MERX bidding system, the impact of technology on small businesses and youth entrepreneurship. The conference will also provide participants with access to business development information from Western Economic Diversification and other federal/provincial departments. La: CÉA anticipates 250 participants from across Alberta and the other western provinces.

Call now to get more information or benefit from early registration rates. Call 1-888-414-6123 or (780) 414-6125, or e-mail us at cea@lacea.ab.ca



La CÉA was established in 1998. Its mission is to promote, facilitate and coordinate the development of economic and tourism activities for Francophones in Alberta. It accomplishes this task by:

- developing incentives to have Francophones participate in economic development;
- bringing awareness to the French community and to Albertans on the added value of providing bilingual services;
- guiding business people with advisory services in the start-up and the expansion of their businesses, and offering support services in the development of the tourism industry; and
- encouraging networking between business people.

# New Agreements to Boost Economic Development in Western First Nations

restern Economic Diversification is helping to ensure that business services are accessible to Western Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

Aboriginal entrepreneurs face the same issues as those faced by other Canadians who want to start or expand their businesses. However, special circumstances faced by Aboriginal entrepreneurs make it difficult for them to access capital, markets, information and business services.

A recent survey by Statistics Canada of 100 Aboriginal businesses shared that 55 per cent of Aboriginal businesses reported inadequate access to capital, including equity and debt. This research clearly shows there is a need for additional capital for Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs. It is part of WD's mandate to ensure all small businesses in the West can access what they need to grow and expand.

By entering into new relationships with Aboriginal peoples, the federal government is helping Aboriginal organizations operate more effectively, enhance their lending portfolio and make a positive contribution to the success of their organizations and communities. For this reason, WD entered into partnerships with seven western Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs) to provide western aboriginal communities with the benefits of membership in the Western Canada Business Service Network.

Presently, the ACCs provide lending services to their small business clients, but do not have the resources necessary to deliver business advice or counselling. The partnerships helps ACCs better meet the business service needs of their small business clients.

Currently, throughout the West there are seven "Aboriginally exclusive" Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) and seven others where the majority of their clients are Aboriginal. Many of WD's network partners provide comprehensive sets of business services to Aboriginal communities and clients located within their geographical boundaries.

For example, in Saskatchewan, the CFDC offices work closely with Tribal Councils in their areas. Community development is done at the grassroots level, offering workshops that strengthen working relationships by bringing together the key leaders to look at ways to develop new Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partnerships.

Although there is business support readily available to rural clients, Aboriginal entrepreneurs living in large urban centres do not have access to the services provided by CFDCs. WD is working to establish Aboriginal business development centres in urban areas that can extend business services to Aboriginal communities.

Last year, the Aboriginal Business Development Centre (ABDC) was launched in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The centre provides a range of services to strengthen existing Aboriginal businesses, as well as create new opportunities for Aboriginal people. What is especially unique about the ABDC's business is that its programs are delivered by Aboriginal people who bring with them an understanding of Aboriginal life experiences, traditions and business aspirations.

For more information call WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

If undeliverable, return to:

WD Edmonton Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue N.W. Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4H7

# Does your business need a health check?

The marketplace is changing. Sales are down; costs are up. E-business is causing competition from areas that didn't exist in the past. As a businessperson you're struggling to figure out how to fix your balance sheet.

You don't need a bandage to quickly fix the problem, what you need is a health check – someone who can discuss ideas that can help put your business back on its feet.

Or, you may have a very healthy, growing business, but an annual visit to a business physician for a diagnostic check-up could also help you manage your growth more effectively and ensure you remain competitive in the marketplace.

There is an old adage that the best things in life are free. Well, if you're a businessperson looking for someone to perform the check-up, then you need only look as far as your closest office of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

Client Service Officers are available to help you at no cost. They can hook you up to the WD diagnostic equipment and help you determine how to improve your business' health. They will take the pulse of the business to learn about what makes it tick, listen to your symptoms, perform a business diagnosis, and recommend solutions and a course of recovery. Sometimes their diagnosis may be a bitter pill to swallow. And, like medicine, they can't guarantee that their prescriptions will be successful.

A WD "business physician" can review your business plan and recommend areas that require work in order to access the financing your business may need to get started or to expand.

The assistance may be as simple as pointing you in the right direction of a specialist for the assistance you need. WD has formed expert associations with numerous professionals who may be just what the doctor ordered. A Client Service Officer may be able to direct you to other government programs and services that might be the answer to your problem.

You may think you need to open new markets, when all you may really need is to take advantage of the market you're already in. You may think a business loan will heal a wound, when it may only cause complications for your business. A natural remedy may be as simple as reducing your inventory.

As international markets open up and e-business takes an increasingly important role in the way people do business, WD can help you explore export market opportunities and discover whether or not exporting is a viable option for your company. Or, they can help you access government procurement opportunities.

WD can recommend whether hiring a recent graduate would help your company in the area of developing international markets for your products or services. They may help provide your company with valuable scientific and technological expertise that will help to level the playing field so your business will have better opportunities to keep competitive and profitable in today's marketplace.

And, that's not where WD stops. They follow up with their clients when they can and continue to provide business counselling and a listening ear when you need to brainstorm new ideas.

WD is dedicated to helping business in Western Canada succeed. One phone call could make the difference in whether or not your business gets the right solutions for its continued good health and prosperity. If you would like to schedule your business check-up or would like more information about WD's programs and services, contact 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our Web site at www.wd.gc.ca.

www.wd.gc.ca

## 1-888-338-WEST (9378)

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#### Saskatchewan

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#### Manitoba P.O. Box 777 Suite 712, The Cargill Bldg. 240 Graham Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3C 2L4 (204) 983-0697



This newsletter is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada. If you would like to contribute to this publication or have any questions, please contact the editor, Barb Steele at: Tel.: (780) 495-4982 Fax: (780) 495-6223 E-mail: access.west@wd.gc.ca. Aussi disponible en français.



# ACCES WEST

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

April - June 2001

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# YOU KNOW THE NAME, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT WD IS REALLY ALL ABOUT?

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) plays an innovative and responsive role on behalf of the Government of Canada in providing western Canadians with policies, programs and services that promote economic opportunity. While WD's mandate has not changed since it was created in 1987, how WD fulfills its mandate has evolved to address changes in the western, Canadian and global economies.

WD was ahead of the times and, based on the needs of business in the West, for many years provided direct loans to business. At that time, similar government departments in other regions of Canada offered grants to spur on economic development, and not loans.

In 1995, WD changed its direction and discontinued direct loans to business. Instead, WD focused on other areas — loan funds targeted at high-growth sectors in cooperation with financial institutions; working in partnership with provincial governments and industry associations on a variety of initiatives; one-stop access to information on how business can access government programs and services; expanding community economic development activities; and advancing the interests of the West in our nation's capital.

To more effectively address the challenges and pursue opportunities of the new knowledge-based economy, WD has again refocused its programs and services. Many of our existing programs currently available to small and medium-sized business fall into the Business Development and Entrepreneurship or Innovation areas.

If you are a small businessperson working in the dark and need someone to help shed a little light on those important things a small business owner needs to know, WD is here to help...and we're just a phone call or a click of the mouse away. We'll help you move into the e-business world, assist you with business planning, provide information on financing options, exporting and selling to government markets, and explain how to attract a recent post-secondary graduate for an international marketing initiative or to improve your science or technology capabilities in order to stay competitive.

We've worked with financial institutions to set up loan programs for targeted sectors, some targeted at small business and some at specific high-growth sectors of the economy.

But WD doesn't stop there! WD formed the Western Canada Business Service Network. The network not only includes WD offices, but also Canada Business Service Centres, offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative, Community Futures Development Corporations and Francophone economic development organizations across the West – over 100 points of service.

WD has developed strategic initiatives in areas important to the West, and has federal

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# Access West

April - June 2001

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 1472429

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# A Message from the Honourable Ron J. Duhamel



Ron J. Duhamel
Minister of Veterans Affairs
and Secretary of State
(Western Economic
Diversification)
(Francophonie)

Western Canada is a vibrant part of our country and a vital player in the global economy. To prosper in this new economy, western Canadians are now relying less on the region's natural resources and more on knowledge, entrepreneurship and innovation.

In this changing environment, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is providing programs and services that take advantage of new opportunities. Our objectives are to encourage development and diversification, add influence for the West in national decision-making, enhance services to western entrepreneurs and facilitate federal-

provincial cooperation.

WD's long-term planning has now been defined within four service lines: Innovation, Partnership and Coordination, Business Development and Entrepreneurship, and Economic Research and Analysis. WD also takes a lead role in coordinating efforts by other federal departments to deliver national programs and other initiatives, such as economic and disaster assistance when needed.

All WD programs and strategies fulfill the Government of Canada's commitment to provide citizen-centred services and to deliver an increasing number of these services on-line.

WD is strongly committed to meeting the needs of ALL entrepreneurs, including services for women, Aboriginal entrepreneurs, persons with disabilities, youth and the Francophone community. In activating and energizing the economic potential of the West, the opportunities that are created and the prosperity that is generated must be readily accessible to all.

This inclusive approach to opportunities is a fundamental part of the way that my Department does business — working together with western Canadians.

# Making Your Trade Show \$\$ Pay Off

Marketing your products and services can be timely and costly, so it is vital to make the most of your dollar by exhibiting at events that meet your business' objectives. Depending on the nature of your business, objectives can range from promoting company awareness to taking orders, generating sales leads to introducing new products or services, entering new markets to networking.

No matter your objective, ensure that you define your target audience and focus on only those events that will put you in touch with your potential clients. There are many trade show and exhibition directories available that will help you to determine which events are best for you.

## Quality Leads Key to Generating Sales

A true measure of success at a show is putting qualified leads into the hands of people in your company who will convert them to business. Research indicates that 80 per cent of all show leads are not handled properly, 43 per cent of prospective buyers receive materials after they have already made a buying decision with another vendor, and 18 per cent report never receiving materials at all.

Many big trade show organizers are now offering tools like lead tracking systems that are laser-scanning systems. Basic information about pre-registered attendees is input into a computer database. Exhibitors run a scanner over a barcode-type symbol on the name tags of attendees' that enter their booth to add information into an exhibitor-specific database. While these systems are handy and provide you with printed and diskette copies of this information, it is not able to incorporate other qualifying information that may be important to you as you follow up on the leads.

## On-site show promotion can take on various forms.

- Brochures are useful, but don't have too many mark a brochure "booth copy" and mail it after you get a lead
- Draws provide lots of names, but not qualified leads.
   Instead, make the prize relate to your product or service to generate quality leads. Have attendees fill in a ballot that includes a couple of marketing questions.



• If you plan to use giveaways, do not leave them out on the table. Offer the giveaway at the lead of your sales pitch to give value to the item.

**Lead Cards** are a tremendous tool. While you can tailor your own lead card to suit your business needs, here are a few ideas about the information you will need to help you remember everything about your potential client.

- 1. Authority are they a decision maker or in a position of influence?
- 2. Cash can they afford to do business?
- 3. Time when do they need it? prioritize leads.
- 4. *Identity* name, position, name of company, address, and telephone and fax numbers.
- 5. Obstacles reasons you can't do business?
- 6. Need what is their need?

Remember to note the promised follow-up and any other comments that may assist you later. To save time, staple their business card in the identity area of the card.

When the show has ended, you now have good quality lead information that can be sorted in order of priority. Have follow-up letters ready in advance, and be sure to fulfill any promises made at the show and have a plan in place for on-going contacts.

Obviously, good products or services, and excellent customer service, are needed to make clients happy, but the use of a lead card at trade shows will improve the quality of leads generated and improve the rate of sale of your product or service. Not to mention, save you time chasing dead ends.

Courses are available through various organizations and colleges that can help you develop your display, and train your booth staff on how to break the ice or disengage from visitors.

LEAD CARD		
Name of Event:		
Date:		
Action:		
Cash:		
Identity:	Name:	
	Position:	
	Organization:	1:
	Address:	
	Phone No.:	
	Fax No.:	
Obstacles:		
Need:		
Promised Follow-Up:		
Comments:		

# YOU KNOW THE NAME, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT WD IS REALLY ALL ABOUT?

continued from page 1

responsibility for such programs as the Infrastructure Canada Program and Western Economic Partnership Agreements. Add to this the resources to handle federal initiatives such as the restructuring of salmon fisheries on the West Coast and managing rehabilitation efforts for natural tragedies such as the Manitoba floods, to name just two, and you can see how truly diverse WD really needs to be to meet the needs of the West.

WD is easily accessible, with offices in the major centres, a 1-800 number that directs you to the closest WD office—1-888-338-WEST (9378), and our Web site—www.wd.gc.ca—is constantly being improved to provide our programs and services on-line.

Look for more information about our four lines of business programs and services inside this issue to find out more about the direction in which WD is moving and the services available to western Canadians.

# WD's PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has developed a strategy to ensure it is able to respond to new economic and policy challenges and priorities facing western Canadians. Four core service lines have been established that will allow us to respond effectively to the needs of Western Canada and western Canadian business: Business Development and Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Partnership and Coordination, and Economic Research and Analysis.

The service lines will provide a framework for WD to develop new programs and services to assist western Canadian entrepreneurs to succeed and promote economic development and growth in Western Canada. As new programs or services become available, Access West will keep you up-to-date on developments.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WD actively supports business growth and development in Western Canada through innovative, cost-effective programs and services that facilitate small business success. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are critical to the economy of the West. Small and micro businesses account for about 50 per cent of all jobs in Western Canada – approximately five per cent higher than the rest of Canada. In order to grow and be successful in today's global economy, SMEs require business and management information, access to capital, assistance in adapting new technology and information on exporting, selling to government and e-commerce.

WD currently provides a number of programs and services to SMEs through its Western Canada Business Service Network which, in addition to WD, includes offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative, Canada Business Service Centres, Community Futures Development Corporations and Francophone economic development organizations across the West – over 100 points of services. WD and its network partners will:

- offer information and business counselling services to SMEs and entrepreneurs in order to improve business management capabilities;
- improve access to high-risk capital to SMEs through specialized loan funds in targeted sectors, and pathfinding services and referrals to alternate sources on financing;
- promote increased awareness and adoption of e-commerce by SMEs through seminars and counselling services;
- help western SMEs improve their export readiness by

# ACCESS

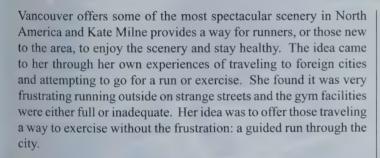
# BRITISH COLUMBIA

April - June 2001

# PUTTING THE RIGHT FOOT FIRST:

Making a go of a new business

By Leigh Ratcliff



After pondering the idea for some time, Kate has now made it a reality: **Pacific Running Guides.** The company is unique in that it that offers various types of running services in Vancouver, such as scheduled runs and one-on-one training.

Kate discovered a niche market of running enthusiasts who are extremely dedicated to the sport. As Kate says, "I challenge you to find any other sport that could get 44,000 participants (referring to the popular Vancouver Sun Run) out of bed on a Sunday morning!" Kate also found that local runners were also interested in their services and she was able to expand her services to cater to these customers, offering clinics and marathon training.



Pacific Running Guides is continuing to grow — now with seven people giving guided tours and future plans for expansion. Kate is looking forward to offering three-day trips to Whistler and eventually offering guided services in other major cities on the West coast, such as Portland, Seattle and San Francisco.

With the help of Western Economic Diversification (WD), she was able to develop a business plan and gain financing through the Self-Reliance Loan Program, a partnership between WD and VanCity that helps small businesses access alternative financing. The VanCity Self-Reliance Loan Program is designed to provide loans for projects not normally financed by traditional lenders, such as lines of credit for business operations.

Kate found the one-on-one attention at WD very valuable. She was given advice on her business plan and her Web site, as well as valuable resources for information. According to Kate, the team at WD was the "single most comprehensive resource for the business start-up phase of Pacific Running Guides."

You can visit Pacific Running Guides on the Web at www.pacificrunningguides.com or call (604) 684-6464, toll-free: 1-877-72 TO RUN (728-6786). ◆



# NEW TOURIST ATTRACTION FEATURES ANCIENT RUINS AND OLD GROWTH FORESTS

By Leigh Ratcliff

Mystery, intrigue and beauty surround Pike Island/Laxspa'aws. This island, located in Prince Rupert Harbour, was home to native tribes over 1,800 years ago. Now you can take a guided tour of these ruins and admire the astounding beauty of the coastal rainforest on Pike Island/Laxspa'aws. Laxspa'aws is the native name for Pike Island.

The tour shows visitors three ancient village and petroglyph sites that are accessible via a well-groomed trail system. Great care was taken in building these trails to preserve the natural habitat, which calls your attention to the magnificence of the forest.

This is a must see for those interested in natural history and cultural education. The project will also bring significant benefits to the community by raising greater awareness of the immense history within this region. It is expected that people will travel from far and wide to get a look at this incredible site, giving the community the added boost it needs to grow.

Pike Island may also be incorporated into the curriculum of the local elementary school, giving kids an interactive way to learn about the history of the area. Other benefits for visitors include local accommodations and other tours such as kayaking, whale watching and bus tours.

# INFAMOUS SHIPS BECOME UNDERWATER MONUMENTS

By Leigh Ratcliff

Get out your mask and snorkel because there is soon to be a new playground for those of you who enjoy scuba diving. The Alberni Reef Society has acquired four Chinese fishing vessels that were seized off the British Columbia coast. Yes, these are the same vessels that

made headlines last summer for bringing in almost 600 refugee claimants.

These ships will make headlines again when they are sunk to form an artificial reef, creating a safe haven for marine life and a dive site. This is sure to bring lots of excitement to Port Alberni, as well as lots of tourists!

Currently, the Alberni Reef Society is preparing the ships to meet Environment Canada's Standards for Ocean Dumping. In spring 2001, two of these ships will take the plunge to their final resting place in the Alberni Inlet. This spot is great for novice and expert divers alike and an abundance of



marine life that can find homes on these ships.

The Alberni Reef Society hopes that people will visit from far and wide to get a look at what these reefs have to offer and Port Alberni will reap the benefits. Since diving is also a winter sport, this will help extend their tourist season.

Other benefits to the community include: acquiring the skills and tools to clean other vessels of this nature, spin-off industries such as boat charters and tours, and added interest in other Port Alberni tourism attractions, such as the McLean Museum, which also received Community Economic Adjustment Initiative funding.

# TOURISM TAKES FLIGHT IN REMOTE AREAS

By Leigh Ratcliff

B.C. has much to offer for those who like to travel, and more small businesses are capitalizing on this by coming up with exciting new ways to entice tourists to their communities.

Tourism is a growing industry in B.C. that can significantly help communities hit by the downturn in the fishing industry to diversify their economies. With the vast number of

activities available to tourists in these communities, B.C. is quickly becoming a key vacation destination. Given its growing importance to the B.C. economy, it is no wonder that coastal communities are looking towards this industry to rejuvenate their communities.

To encourage this transition, the **Community Economic Adjustment Initiative's** steering committee recently approved \$950,000 in non-repayable contributions towards tourism-focused initiatives, for an initiative total of more than \$7.3 million for this sector.



The Honourable Ron J. Duhamel, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Francophonie).

"Coastal communities are looking at new ways to diversify their economies. Many are opting to diversify into new areas, such as tourism and aquaculture," said Ron J. Duhamel.

Under the initiative, WD is working with the rural Community Futures Development Corporations to build local adjustment capacity and provide assistance to community adjustment projects.

offering skills development and export counselling

- deliver the International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) – a program that matches recent graduates and SMEs seeking new marketing and export skills; and
- provide information to SMEs about selling to government, and assist them to identify and take advantage of opportunities to participate in major federal procurement contracts that include regional benefits for the West.

Entering new markets can be costly. WD's International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) assists small and medium-sized companies to take advantage of the

tremendous worldwide growth in international trade by helping them hire recent graduates to work on international market development projects. Graduates can identify international markets characteristics, plan and implement export market strategies, prepare export promotional materials or their translation, modify packaging to meet specific market demands, or direct product promotion to export markets.

The ITPP will provide up to \$37,500 in salary support over a three-year period. For complete details regarding criteria for this program, contact WD or visit our Web site at: http://www.wd.gc.ca/ eng/export/xitpp.html.

WD provides a variety of programs and services to ensure business opportunities are available to ALL entrepreneurs. In cooperation with network partners and other organizations, WD programs are available for small and medium-sized businesses, including programs for women entrepreneurs, persons with disabilities, youth, Aboriginal entrepreneurs and the Francophone community. Community Futures Development Corporations are located in the smaller centres and rural areas of Western Canada and offer general investment programs and the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program. Offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative offer programs specifically targeted at the special needs of women. Francophone and Aboriginal economic development organizations provide services to their areas. For more information about WD's programs, contact WD or visit our Web Site, Economic and Community Development section, which provide links to our partners who offer these programs.

WD has established loan fund programs with a number of financial institutions across the West to increase the amount of capital available to businesses in sectors that are typically considered "high risk," such as advanced technologies, information technology and telecommunications, and agricultural value-added processing. WD has also supported the creation of numerous micro loan programs for small business, including one specifically designed for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Through its loan fund programs, WD has leveraged private sector investment in higher risk, emerging and export-oriented small business. WD provides business planning advice and screens applicants, but final loan decisions are made by the financial institutions on a commercial basis under this program. For information about

the various WD loan funds, contact WD or visit our Web site at: http:// www.wd.gc.ca/eng/finance/ xnetwork.html.

#### INNOVATION

The service lines will

provide a framework for

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programs and services to

assist western Canadian

entrepreneurs to succeed

and promote economic

development and growth

in Western Canada.

Because of its mandate to promote diversification, WD, from its inception, has made investments in innovation using existing programs, as well as various strategic initiatives and Western Economic Partnership Agreements to lever matching funds from provincial governments. WD invested approximately \$440 million in over 2,500 innovation projects since 1988. Over the past several years alone, the Department has supported over 100 strategic initiatives in areas such as: life sciences, new media, fuels cells,

ocean sciences, medical research and the Canadian Light Source synchrotron program.

WD's objectives in the area of innovation include:

- making strategic investments in key technologies to increase western Canadian innovation capacity, strengthen technology clusters and increase the amount of research and technology commercialization;
- developing and implementing programs and services to support SMEs in adopting innovative processes and technology;
- delivering the First Jobs in Science and Technology Program to support recent graduates and SMEs; and
- working with federal, provincial, university and industry officials to encourage a mutually supportive and strategic approach to building an innovative, knowledge-based economy in Western Canada.

WD's investments in innovation will take into account both provincial and pan-western opportunities and

## WD's PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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priorities. We will also work to promote linkages between western and national research organizations and initiatives to ensure activities are coordinated and build on existing regional strengths and national priorities.

The First Jobs in Science and Technology Program provides small and medium-sized businesses in Western Canada with the opportunity to hire recent graduates of science, technology and engineering programs. The program helps ensure that western SMEs can hire the people needed to keep competitive and profitable in today's marketplace. While helping business acquire the skills and expertise they need to excel, it provides graduates with valuable experience in their chosen field.

The First Jobs program will provide up to \$37,500 in salary support over a three-year period. For complete details regarding criteria for this program, contact WD or visit our Web site at: http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/finance/programs/xfirstjb.html.

#### PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

WD plays an important role in Western Canada in forging partnerships with provincial governments in the West and advocating on behalf of westerners within the Government of Canada. These activities are important for ensuring inter-governmental cooperation and joint action in areas of mutual interest. As a key part of our long-term strategy, the Department will continue to engage in strategic partnerships and seek new opportunities to provide leadership and coordination to deliver economic programs and services to western Canadians.

WD has been instrumental in promoting economic growth and employment opportunities in the West through cooperative arrangements with other orders of government. Examples of our activities include urban development agreements and Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPAs).

Formal urban development agreements in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver have brought together WD with other federal departments, and provincial and municipal governments, to jointly plan and coordinate activities that address urban development issues. As part of our plan for the future, WD will be working with its federal, provincial and municipal government partners and key community stakeholders to identify new opportunities for cooperation and joint action.

Beginning in 1997, WD entered into WEPA agreements with the four western provinces. The current WEPAs, which expire in 2002, will result in an investment of up to \$160 million by WD and the four western provinces over the five-year period of these agreements.

Over the coming months, WD will be consulting with each provincial government to determine the level of interest in renewing the WEPA agreements and discuss potential areas for joint action. WD also participates in a number of forums with the four western provincial governments which address a range of economic development and other issues.

As part of our long-term strategic priorities, WD will work to:

- continue to develop closer working relationships with provincial governments in order to strengthen federal-provincial cooperation, reduce duplication of efforts and encourage broader participation by westerners in the benefits of economic growth;
- explore opportunities for joint action by federal and provincial governments to address specific regional economic development challenges and priorities in areas such as community innovation, community adjustment, and urban and rural development issues; and
- participate in and facilitate federal and intergovernmental forums to develop a cooperative approach to address key federal priorities in horizontal issues that will forge partnerships with other levels of government, other federal departments and the private sector to implement federal strategies in areas such as a renewed approach to Aboriginal economic development.

#### ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

As part of its strategy for the future, WD will increase its capacity to provide economic research and analysis on Western Canada. In carrying out this work, WD will work closely with other research groups and government organizations to encourage increased attention to, and analysis of, the western Canadian issues and trends. These activities will ensure policy makers in the West have access to relevant research on western issues, and be able to share research findings on issues of concern to the region.

The results of this work will improve the ability of WD to provide advice to federal policy and decision makers on western Canadian issues, promote greater understanding of the western Canadian economy, and help WD and other federal departments design programs and services that address western Canadian needs and priorities. •

# PUT YOUR BUSINESS CARD TO WORK FOR YOU!

If you're looking for an inexpensive marketing tool, look no further than your business card!

A business card provides your client with the first impression of your company, so whether you're just starting out or you've been around for years, there are a few simple things to remember.

The business card can't tell the whole story about your company, so don't cram too much information onto the card – keep it simple. Include your name, title, company name and logo (the logo should be the largest element on the card), address, phone and fax numbers, and your E-mail address. Ensure the typeface you choose is easily

readable. And, don't make the card an unusual shape that makes it difficult to put in a business card file.

Colour, wording and texture of your business card will determine the appeal and its ability to convey your company's image. The type of business you run will help determine the design. For instance, a consulting business should have a business card that conveys professionalism and reliability – a traditional looking card with black printing on a white, grey or beige background would probably be the best choice. Whereas, a children's entertainment centre might want to try a brightly coloured card with words written in a child's script. •

## Use your business card as a marketing tool...

- Always carry extra business cards in your wallet.
- Provide your satisfied clients with extra copies of your card and ask them to pass along to potential customers.
- Use your card as an ad in any publications that have a business card classified section – these ads are usually very affordable.
- Always leave your card when you have an appointment with your doctor, dentist, mechanic, hair salon, etc., and ask the owners to refer people to you.
- When you send mail or pay bills, enclose your card.

- Leave your business card in libraries, and tack them up on community bulletin boards or in the centre of supermarket or school bulletin boards.
- Exchange cards with friends and at social gatherings.
- Join organizations, clubs or associations and make sure the members get your card.
- If you belong to a health club, ask the receptionist if you can leave your cards on the counter or on a bulletin board.



# YOUR FEEDBACK COUNTS!

Access West is undergoing a revitalization and we're interested in your opinion of the new look!

The "Innovation" graphic design not only provides a visible connection to WD's Innovation business service line, but also provides a consistent look with a number of the Department's other products — exhibit graphics, report covers, kit folders and bookmarks. The vivid, eye-catching design of these other products, and the positive response by

the public and WD staff, was the incentive for incorporating this look into Access West.

If you have any comments about the new pilot design — good or bad, please drop us a line at access.west@wd.gc.ca or contact me at (780) 495-4982. ◆

Barb Steele Editor If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# ACCESS WEST GOES ON-LINE!



Reaching a greater audience and keeping up with the times means taking advantage of the Internet. Not everyone has access to it, but more and more businesses and homes are utilizing this exciting window to sources of information we've never dreamed of or previously had at our fingertips.

The Government of Canada made a strong commitment that: By 2004, our goal is to be known around the world as the government most connected to its citizens, with Canadians able to access all government information and services on-line at the time and place of their choosing. This commitment was reconfirmed in the January 2001 Speech from the Throne – The Government will continue to work toward putting its services on-line by 2004, to better connect with citizens.

The October Speech from the Throne underlined that the Government On-Line (GOL) Initiative is the Government of

Canada's commitment to offer citizens and businesses faster, more convenient and seamless access to services and programs. WD has met the Tier One objectives, ensuring that information on all key the Department's programs and commonly used forms are available on-line.

Access West has been available in a PDF format for some time now on the WD Web site but, as part of the GOL initiative, we are working to improve access by providing the newsletter in a HTML format that improves accessibility to all readers. It may take a little time to fully utilitize this feature, but it's a goal we hope to reach shortly.

As a reader, you have two options—you can receive the newsletter by regular mail services or you can subscribe to the on-line version.

### Subscription is Quick and Easy

Subscribing to Access West has never been easier! Visit the WD Web site at www.wd.gc.ca, enter the Media Centre and check out our Access West Subscription Services.

- New subscriptions choice of on-line subscription or print copy will be available, and in both official languages.
- Update your current mailing address or e-mail address to ensure the most accurate information is always in our database.
- Convert your subscription from print copy to the on-line version by indicating you are updating your subscription.
- Readers can also request to be removed from our database if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter.

As each issue goes on-line, you'll receive an e-mail notice with a direct link to the newest issue of Access West, complete with an index of topics available in the current issue. You can then check out the newsletter at your convenience, and in the process help cut down on paper waste and work together with WD in its sustainable development efforts.

We're always looking for ways to improve, so if you have any questions or comments, or would like to learn more about Access West, please don't hesitate to contact Barb Steele at (780) 495–4982 or access.west@wd.gc.ca. ◆

# ACCES WEST

CA1 WE - A18 WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

July - September 2001

# WORK-LINKING: A New Partnership Alternative

Small business owners tend to concentrate on niche markets where they know what they're doing and can make a name for themselves. What they may have overlooked, however, are the opportunities available if they partnered with the most available resources—other small businesses.

Business partnerships are formed daily for a variety of reasons. A key to small business partnering is establishing strong relationships with other small businesses that can provide expertise in areas that complement their own.

Within local communities, partnerships may be as simple as sharing an advertising opportunity with a complementary business, working with the Chamber of Commerce on initiatives or events, or offering seminars on specific services with other businesses.

Although work-linking, a unique new way to grow your business, is often associated with home-based businesses, the idea is not limited to those entrepreneurs who choose to work from home. Work-linking has an advantage over the "do it all myself" style of management, allowing businesses to expand their capabilities by working with others. By forming a temporary alliance, a business can open up its geographic market and offer a broader range of services.

Work-linking is an agreement to operate as a temporary, flexible partnership that can be as simple as a collaborative advertisement or brochure that features related independent businesses or as complex as a joint venture agreement. Partners can be across town, in the next province or on the other side of the globe. Just think of the opportunities!

These "virtual companies" or "strategic alliances" are growing between businesses, large and small, to extend their market reach through temporary partnerships that broaden the capabilities of each partner without increasing overhead. These work-links also create a mutual network among the team of independent businesses.

To get started in work-linking requires defining business expansion objectives and determining what outside skills are required. Without this blueprint to forming an alliance, entrepreneurs may expand their business, but likely won't be able to identify the skill sets they need from their work-linking partners.

Rarely will work-linking partners meet face-toface, so these strategic alliances are not easily formed and managed, and will be formed by trial and error. The Internet becomes a valuable resource when researching partners or opportunities.

Business patterns are changing. Becoming an independent, small businessperson is on the rise. But while the small business owner mindset can be an asset, it can also blind one to opportunities for combining talents. Work-linking partnerships will not only help increase business, but also offer the chance to expand your horizons while maintaining independence.

Only your imagination limits the possibilities of work-linking partnerships! •



Canada

-888-338-WEST

# Access West

July - September 2001

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE Ron J. Dubamel



Ron J. Duhamel Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Francophonie) Forming new partnerships that make sense for Western Canada has been part of the way Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has done business since the Department opened its doors in 1987.

In 1996, WD formed the Western Canada Business Service Network to ensure its services were made available throughout the West. The network partners include Canada Business Service Centres, Community Futures Development Corporations, offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative and WD's own offices in the four western

provinces. In April of this year, four Francophone Economic Development Organizations, one in each province, became the newest members of the network.

WD also works in cooperation with educational and financial institutions, as well as with other federal, provincial and municipal government departments to deliver national programs such as the Infrastructure Canada Program.

As the Minister responsible for WD, I am proud of the important role the Department plays in forging successful partnerships in the West that enable the Government of Canada and western Canadians to work together on shared priorities. WD will continue to engage in strategic partnerships and seek new opportunities to provide leadership and coordination to deliver economic programs and services to western Canadians that are innovative, sustainable, entrepreneurial and inclusive. •

# NEW LOAN PROGRAMS FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE-BASED BUSINESSES

By Gordon Eckert

The number of financing options for budding or existing entrepreneurs across Western Canada was recently boosted by new loan programs made possible by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) in partnership with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) and Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC).

The programs target "knowledge-based businesses" and have broader eligibility criteria for firms in this sector. They follow in the footsteps of WD's loan programs introduced in 1996. The loan funds provide a new source of patient debt capital to firms in sectors that traditionally have difficulty obtaining financing. Today, WD and its financial partners offer a variety of loan programs that are aimed at industry sectors important to Western Canada.

Each program provides access to patient and flexible debt capital on terms especially suited to the unique needs and cash flow requirements of small and medium-sized businesses. The loan programs are unique in that WD also provides businesses with free information and advice on a wide range of financing alternatives and will help determine their eligibility for programs that best suit their needs.

To be eligible under a knowledge-based loan program, interested entrepreneurs should be operating or about to operate a business in Western Canada and should meet a few other criteria. An important condition focuses on the strength of an entrepreneur's business idea and desire to pursue a "knowledge-based business" project. They should have a commercially viable product or service and sound business plan. It also helps if the product or service has proven market acceptance and/or export potential.

Loans made through the programs can be used for research and development leading to commercialization, pre-commercial and commercial product or service development, enhancements to production and services capacity, marketing and promotional activities, or

working capital for anticipated sales increases. Loans range from a minimum of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$1 million per project, and \$2 million per borrower.

Eligible companies will be involved in one of the following sectors: advanced materials, aerospace, advanced manufacturing technologies, biotechnology, environment, health, information technology, multimedia, film and ocean industries, or other products and services deemed eligible.

For more information about either of these programs, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit the Business Financing section on WD's Web site: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/finance/xnetwork.html.

#### Business Loans for Knowledge and Growth



- \$15 million capital pool
- loans can range from a minimum of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$500,000 per project and \$1 million per borrower
- firms involved in tourism are also eligible
- loans can also be used for the acquisition of specialized assets and work in progress, marketing and promotional activities, to cover pre-shipping costs or provide working capital for anticipated sales increases

### Loans for Knowledge-Based Businesses



- \$20 million capital pool
- loans can range to a maximum of \$1 million per project and maximum of \$2 million per borrower
- loans can also be used for enhancements to new production or service capacity or market development and expansion (not including retailing, wholesaling or reselling)

# USP - THE SECRET MARKETING WEAPON

Today's competitive marketplace demands that you rise above your competition if you want to succeed. This means getting your customer's attention and keeping it by providing an incentive that will make them *want* to buy your product or service.

Place yourself in the shoes of the potential customer and decide what benefit will make your product or service appear to stand out from anything else available on the market. The secret marketing weapon that will give your business a competitive advantage is called the **unique selling position**, or **USP**!

What is your USP? A USP should be the biggest and most compelling reason your potential customer will choose your product over the competition. You'll get your best results from a USP that customers obviously desire and no other business is using.

- *Great Customer Service* If you have ever received *excellent* customer service, you'll remember how the business went out of its way to help you and you will want to do business with them again. Great customer service *always* makes a great USP.
- Low Prices If your prices are lower than your competitors, make this your USP. Splash this clearly in your advertising and be specific about how low your prices really are. "We guarantee our prices are 10% lower than anybody else!"
- Untouchable Guarantees A reasonable guarantee won't make the grade as a USP, but using a strong, Iron Clad or Risk-Free guarantee can give you a real advantage. Lifetime Guarantees work the best. Live up to the promises of these guarantees, and although you may experience a few customer returns over the years, you'll get far more business with this type of USP.

- Better Selection Choices generate sales because consumers love variety. For your advertising to be effective, ensure that you spell out exactly how many choices your customers have. "Most stores offer only 2 widgets, but we have over 27 to choose from in 20 different colours." Be careful though, too much inventory may not be a good thing, so use this as an USP only if it makes sense for your business.
- Free Shipping If you have joined the e-business world or sell products by mail, free shipping could be your USP. Mail order buyers complain about the high shipping charges, but love to take advantage of free shipping. Canada Post also offers solutions for e-businesses and can help reduce your costs in these areas, making this USP more appealing for your business and your customers.
- After Sales Service Product help and support that
  customers can count on after your product is in their
  home or office is a major USP! Let your customers
  know you'll always be there for them, whether it's
  through your concrete or electronic storefront, or on
  the phone. Not only will you have a satisfied
  customer, but one who'll likely buy from you again.
- Easy Credit Terms The second most powerful USP is manageable credit terms for purchases. "Buy now and don't pay for six months" ads really work! Consumers like the idea of taking something home and not worrying about a payment for six months. Long-term payments and no interest are also big attention grabbers for consumers.

There are many choices for your business' USP, but unless you shout it out to your customers, they'll never know about it. Remind your sales people to always repeat your unique selling position every time they're with a customer, and always use your USP in advertising.

# ACCESS

# BRITISH COLUMBIA

July - September 2001

# COMMUNITY FUTURES B.C. CELEBRATES PARTNERSHIPS

By Community Futures Development Association of B.C.

The Community Futures Development Association of B.C. (CFDA) celebrated its partners at a gala event in Vancouver recently to mark the contributions made by federal, provincial and local organizations in creating jobs and opportunities in British Columbia's rural communities.

Western Economic Diversification Canada's Deputy Minister Oryssia Lennie and Acting Assistant Deputy Minister Keith Draper were on hand to receive the CFDA Partnership Award on behalf of WD. Mrs. Lennie was also the keynote speaker at the Gala Awards Dinner that was attended by close to 200 community leaders. WD provides core funding to the 34 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) across the province.

Other partners honoured include:

- Forest Renewal BC (FRBC) and the CFDCs established a partnership in 1996 to help diversify and stabilize the economic and employment base of communities dependent on the forest industry. The *Forest Community Business Loan Fund* has since helped 1,090 businesses and created/maintained more than 6,370 full and part-time jobs in B.C.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has been working with 13 coastal CFDCs since 1997 to promote



CFDA Chairperson Dave Wilbur presents WD Deputy Minister Oryssia Lennie and A/ADM Keith Draper with CFDC Partnership Award.

diversification of the coastal communities' economies through loans and support programs for businesses in fishing or marine-related activities. The *Fisheries Legacy Trust* partnership has helped nearly 430 businesses and created more than 2,939 jobs along the coast.

- The Insurance Corporation of B.C. (ICBC) launched the *Community Enterprise Investment Fund* with the CFDA in March 2001 to assist companies, co-operatives, community enterprises and entrepreneurs with ventures that help diversify local economies. ICBC will provide \$5 million in investment funds as part of its efforts to increase investment in B.C. All loans will be fully secured and protected by a WD loan loss reserve account.
- **BC Hydro** and the CFDA have worked together since 1994 on a range of projects, including: the compilation of a

COMMUNITY FUTURES B.C. CELEBRATES PARTNERSHIPS continued from page 1

comprehensive economic development inventory now on-line at BC Hydro's Web site, board training and a group mentoring program for entrepreneurs.

• Columbia Basin Trust — The partnership between the Trust and the five CFDCs in Nelson, Cranbrook, Trail, Prince George and Revelstoke was established in 1997 to create a \$2.5 million regional lending program for small and medium-sized businesses. The program has helped nearly 25 businesses and created more than 350 jobs in the region.

• Alcan has worked closely with the CFDC of 16-37 in the Terrace-Kitimat area on a variety of community development projects and initiatives. "They're a strong corporate citizen," says CFDC Manager Joe Whitney. "They've helped us out tremendously, and we're looking forward to continuing to work with them on a number of projects that will benefit our communities."

The event was sponsored by: WD; the Canada Information Office; the Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers; Canadian Rural Partnerships; Royal Trust; and BC Hydro. •

# BRIGHT IDEAS PUT TO THE TEST

By Caroline Hickton

Creative thinkers and innovators gathered in Burnaby on March 24<sup>th</sup> for the **Innovators Workshop** to learn what to do with their latest million dollar idea.

The Canadian Innovation Centre (CIC) and Western Economic

Diversification Canada (WD) hosted the workshop for inventors and entrepreneurs who are looking for a push in the right direction to get their idea to market.

The Canadian Innovation Centre specializes in helping innovators bring their products to market. Their services include: critical factor assessment, quick-look concept approval, software evaluation, market preview, technology assessment and custom market research. The CIC, in cooperation with partners such as WD, provides Canadians with ideas on how to enhance their business planning processes, and information and resources to improve their rate of success getting their concept to reality.

The workshop was well attended, with over 100 attendees. WD Program Delivery Officer Craig Fulton described the air in the room as "electric and filled with brilliant minds." Speakers included representatives from the CIC and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office, and Patrick Rooney from Kelsan Technologies shared the story of his company's success with the audience.

Canadian innovation and entrepreneurship have gained increasing recognition since 1976 when the University of Waterloo established the Inventor's Assistance Program. The CIC was founded in 1981 as an independent not-for-profit organization to assist inventors and entrepreneurs. Since its inception, 70,000 Canadian entrepreneurs and innovators have benefited from its services.

WD funded the workshop and admission was free. Included on the agenda were helpful hints on technical and production factors, market demand, market acceptability and risk factors. The CIC also reviewed 10 key elements of successful new product licensing and marketing.

For more information, contact WD at (604) 666-6256 or toll-free at 1-888-338-WEST (9378). You can also contact the CIC at 1-800-265-4559, on the Web at: www.innovationcentre.ca, or by e-mail to info@innovationcentre.ca.

# Victoria Connects STEPS UP TO THE PODIUM TO PICK UP THE BRONZE IPAC AWARD

By Jean-Pierre Roy

It doesn't get much better than this — an IPAC award for innovation management, one of the highest prestige recognition programs in Canadian government. The Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) established the award in 1990 to recognize outstanding organizational achievement in the public sector.

The theme of the 2001 IPAC award competition was "Developing the Public Service of Tomorrow." Sponsored by IBM Canada and PricewaterhouseCoopers, three award winners and four additional finalists were selected from among 100 entries from federal, provincial and municipal government bodies from every region of the country by a five-member jury.

**Victoria Connects**, an initiative that offers quick, convenient service delivery that reduces costs and improves efficiency for the government partners, was the proud winner of the 2001 Bronze Award.

Launched in October 1999, Victoria Connects is an innovative storefront operation run by three levels of government to provide business start-up and development services to the Greater Victoria region. The Greater Victoria Economic Development Commission, Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Government Agents' Services of the B.C. Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise partner to offer the convenience of a full range of municipal, provincial and federal business development services in one location.

Victoria Connects responds directly to the needs of Victoria's business community – from the start-up enterprise to the established or expanding business. The centre offers regulatory services, including: business registration, licensing and tax



payments, and business development support including information, training, workshops and business counselling.

Ken Stratford of the Greater Victoria Economic Development Commission said: "At the Economic Development Commission, we assist and advise in the start-up of over 200 new companies each year. What these new entrepreneurs want is access to needed government services and information that revolves around their needs as customers. They're busy-and they want fast answers, regardless of which level of government is responsible.

"Victoria Connects reverses the traditional role of government services. We say, 'tell us what you need, and we'll devise the fastest and most efficient way to get that information or service to you.' It's called one-stop shopping, and through the IPAC award, the whole country knows that we mean it and we do indeed deliver that level of service," he added.

Victoria Connects is located at: Suite G-7, Sussex Place, 1001 Douglas Street in Victoria. Business Service Officer: (250) 356-7907; Government Agent: (250) 356-7915; WD Officer: (250) 356-7834

For more information about the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), visit their Web site at: http://www.ipaciapc.ca.

# Western Canada Business Service Network - B.C. Style

The Western Canada Business Service Network of professionals can help you find what you need to establish a business or make it grow with services ranging from practical information and funding options, to counselling and support. In British Columbia, network partners include:

#### Western Economic Diversification Canada

Suite 700, Price Waterhouse Bldg. 601 West Hastings Street Vancouver BC V6B 5G9 (604) 666-6256 or 1-888-338-WEST (9378)

#### Canada/British Columbia Business Service Centre

601 West Cordova Street Vancouver BC V6B 1G1 (604) 775-5525 or 1-800-667-2272

# La Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique

1555, 7° Avenue Ouest, bureau 220 Vancouver BC V6J 1S1 (604) 732-3534

#### Women's Enterprise Society of B.C.

#103, 1635 Abbott Street Kelowna BC V1Y 1A9 (250) 868-3454 or 1-800-643-7014

#### **Community Futures Development Corporations**

CFDC of Alberni Clayoquot, Port Alberni (250) 724-1241

CFDC of Boundary Area, Greenwood/Grand Forks

(250) 445-6618 / (250) 442-2722

CFDC of Cariboo-Chilcotin, Williams Lake/Bella Colla

(250) 392-3626 / (250) 799-5744

CFDC of Central Interior First Nations, Kamloops

(250) 828-9833

CFDC of Central Island, Nanaimo

(250) 753-6414

CFDC of Central Kootenay, Nelson

(250) 352-1933

CFDC of Central Okanagan, Kelowna

(250) 868-2132

CFDC of Cowichan Region, Duncan/Sooke

(250) 746-1004 / (250) 642-1510

CFDC of Fraser Fort George, Prince George

(250) 562-9622

CFDC of Greater Trail, Trail

(250) 364-2595

CFDC of Haida Gwaii, Masset/Skidegate

(250) 626-5594 / (250) 559-4499

CFDC of Howe Sound, Squamish

(604) 892-5467

CFDC of Mount Waddington, Port McNeill/Port Hardy

(250) 956-2220 / (250) 949-7888

CFDC of Nadina, Houston

(250) 845-2522

CFDC of Nicola Valley, Merritt

(250) 378-3923

CFDC of North Cariboo, Quesnel

(250) 747-1212

CFDC of North Fraser, Mission

(604) 826-6252

CFDC of the North Okanagan, Vernon

(250) 545-2215

CFDC of Okanagan-Similkameen, Penticton

(250) 493-2566

CFDC of Pacific Northwest, Prince Rupert

(250) 622-2332

CFDC of the Peace Liard, Fort St. John/Dawson Creek

(250) 785-6794 / (250) 782-8748

CFDC of Powell River Region, Powell River

(604) 485-7901

CFDC of Revelstoke, Revelstoke

(250) 837-5345

CFDC of Shuswap, Salmon Arm

(250) 832-2118

CFDC of South Fraser, Abbotsford/Chilliwack

(604) 864-5770 / (604) 793-0196

CFDC of the S.E. Region of B.C., Cranbrook

(250) 489-4356

CFDC of Sto:lo, Chilliwack

(604) 858-0009

CFDC of Strathcona, Campbell River/Courtenay

(250) 830-1141 / (250) 334-4415

CFDC of Stuart-Nechako, Vanderhoof/Fort St. James

(250) 567-5219 / (250) 996-0112

CEDC - Com Compton A-1 - - C

CFDC of Sun Country, Ashcroft

(250) 453-9165

CFDC of Sunshine Coast, Sechelt

(604) 885-1959

CFDC of Thompson Country, Kamloops

(250) 828-8772

Nuu Chah Nulth Economic Development Corporation, Port Alberni

(250) 724-3131

16-37 Community Futures, Terrace

(250) 635-5449

Community Futures Development Association of B.C., Vancouver

(604) 681-7130

# WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE WEST

Women entrepreneurs are playing an increasingly important role in the creation and operation of small businesses across Canada, yet they have traditionally faced difficulties breaking into the entrepreneurial arena. Fortunately for women in Western Canada there is a network of women's organizations that are available to help!

Funded through Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative provide business information and services specifically aimed at women entrepreneurs. Each western

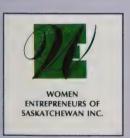
province has set up its own component of this pan-western initiative. The non-profit groups, led by volunteer boards of entrepreneurs and business professionals, offer help to women who want to start and grow their own business.

Services are offered that improve access to financing, education and training, business counselling and loan aftercare, information, networking and mentoring. Each organization works to identify and fill service gaps facing entrepreneurs with products and services uniquely tailored to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs in their province. •



Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association (AWEIA)
AWEIA has offices in Calgary and Edmonton,

but also has a network of business coaches located throughout Alberta. The client-centred approach to service delivery means businesswomen take responsibility for moving their business plans forward...while AWEIA can guide and offer support, information and options. For more information about AWEIA, its program and services, contact 1-800-713-3558, or visit their Web site at: www.aweia.ab.ca.



## Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (W.E.)

W.E. provides business solutions for success by working with women considering a business, starting a business or operating an existing

business. Helping women throughout Saskatchewan to achieve their entrepreneurial goals is a priority. W.E. is a membership organization, with five rural chapters in various communities across the province. Contact the Saskatoon or Regina offices to inquire about W.E. programs and services, at 1-800-879-6331, or visit the Web site at: www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca.



## Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba

Establishing, operating and expanding a business requires careful planning and the funds to put viable ideas into action. The Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba offers services throughout the province such as: practical loan options to start, purchase or expand businesses; consultations with

experienced professionals and continuous business knowledge development by way of business seminars; business-to-business linking program; youth programs and other special initiatives. Winnipeg is home to the office of the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba. Contact 1-800-203-2343 or (204) 988-1860, or visit their Web site at: www.mbnet.mb.ca/wec.



Women's Enterprise Society of British Columbia (WESBC) WESBC's vision is to be the gateway to

women's entrepreneurial success. From its offices in Kelowna and Vancouver, WESBC delivers a variety of services and innovative training programs designed to assist women entrepreneurs in even the most remote communities of British Columbia. Whether a woman is starting, purchasing or growing an enterprise, WEBSC can assist her along the path to prosperity. For more information, contact (250) 868-3454 or 1-800-643-7014, or visit their Web site at: www.wes.bc.ca.

# SERVICE NETWORK VOLUNTEERS HONOURED IN OTTAWA

By Stephen Lamoureux

It is appropriate with this being *International Year of Volunteers* that members of the Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN) should take a front seat in the celebrations.

Roland Dandeneau, Chairperson of Community Futures Partners of Manitoba, and Anita Ratchinsky, Chairperson of Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association (AWEIA), were selected by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) to be honoured at celebrations held in Ottawa in April. Dandeneau and Ratchinsky, who exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit of the West, represented the volunteers of the WCBSN at the events.



Human Resources Development Minister Jane Stewart honours Anita Ratchinsky (left) and Roland Dandeneau (right) at Federal Volunteer Recognition ceremonies in Ottawa.

During a reception at the Museum of Civilization on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 60 volunteers joined other outstanding Canadians, including Aboriginal peoples, acclaimed musicians, Parliamentarians and representatives of the Games of La Francophonie, to meet Prince Charles. Volunteers from across Canada were honoured by the Government of Canada at the Federal Volunteer Recognition Ceremony on Parliament Hill on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Dandeneau has volunteered for 34 years in various capacities and enjoys making a contribution to his community locally, provincially and nationally. "Economic development is a special interest and I saw an opportunity that would provide special benefits to my community and an opportunity for me

to make a contribution," he says of his 11-year involvement with the Community Futures program in Manitoba.

The most important reason why Ratchinsky volunteers her time is that she has achieved many things in her life, not only those things she set her mind to achieve, but other opportunities that have enriched her life in many ways. "Volunteering is an opportunity for me to give back and to help others achieve their goals and dreams. I have a diverse background of experience and if I can give a helping hand to others that allows them to succeed, then I will have made a difference."

WD is fortunate to have the support of many volunteers, without whose help the Department would not successfully deliver its mandate. WD's network partners have relied heavily on volunteers who have put the needs of others above their own and given selflessly of their time and talent as members of volunteer boards or mentors.

Community Futures offices rely on approximately 2,872 volunteers across the West, including 996 volunteer board members. Offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative involve 232 volunteers, including 32 board members. The four Francophone Economic Development Organizations also engage approximately 50 board members in total.

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs), Women's Enterprise Initiative organizations and Francophone Economic Development Organizations are strongly connected to the community through their volunteer board members. The most impressive indicator of their success is the willingness of westerners to volunteer for these organizations. Volunteerism is key to healthy, dynamic, vital organizations whose leaders are well respected in the community. The commitment of volunteers maximizes the effectiveness of WD's resources and ensures the solutions are tailored to meet local needs.

The Western Canada Business Service Network includes WD offices, CFDCs, offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative, Canada Business Services Centres and Francophone Economic Development Organizations across the West. For more information about the network partners or how to volunteer for one of these organizations in your area, contact 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or see the WCBSN listing in each regional supplement enclosed. •

# LINKING INNOVATION IN THE WEST

By Sandra Volume, WestLink Innovation Network Ltd.

Partnerships are an important part of today's business world, with alliances between public and private sectors being key to many successful organizations. A truly remarkable western Canadian example of partnership is the WestLink Innovation Network Ltd.

WestLink is a not-for-profit organization created in 1999 to facilitate communication, collaboration and technology commercialization among the 14 western universities and their affiliated research institutes.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) provided start-up and operational funding, with the original seed investment from WD being a catalyst to develop programs and services in Western Canada.

WestLink has partnered with university-based technology transfer offices and two Networks of Centres of Excellence to offer a range of programs and services for its members. It provides the foundation for networking and communications through meetings, Web site materials and secure Intranet, discussion groups, collection and provision of statistical research on the members, and sharing of best practices. WestLink also offers skill-building events delivered in partnership with its members to researchers, graduate students and the business community, and works to increase the awareness of technology transfer issues to its stakeholders.

Recently, the WestLink Technology Commercialization Internship Program was developed to meet the need for trained managers with an understanding of early stage technology development issues. The program allows 20 interns to participate in three 8-month work terms with a university technology transfer office, a high-tech small business enterprise and a venture capital/finance investment firm.

Financial support for this program has been tremendous, with sponsors such as WD, NSERC, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the four western provinces.

The interns from the West were selected from over 200 applicants and began the program in May. WD Deputy Minister Oryssia Lennie and Dr. Bob Church, Chair of the Alberta Science and Research Authority, spoke to the interns at an introductory "boot camp" held in Edmonton. The camp



Sandra Volume from WestLink working with Matt Ferguson, Technology Manager, University/Industry Liaison, Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, B.C.).

provided them with an overview of technology commercialization in Western Canada and an opportunity to network with other interns and leading experts in the field.

WestLink works in many capacities to meet the varying needs of its diverse members, as well as with smaller institutions to develop their internal capacities and discover new inventions. It also provides linkages to the larger members looking for technology bundling or partnership opportunities and offers a range of contract services, such as the "Spin-Off Company Survey" – a database and survey process that was developed by the University of British Columbia - Industry Liaison Office.

The needs of WestLink's members are evolving, especially with technology commercialization being a relatively new industry in Canada and the emerging knowledge that universities can be great resources for innovation and partnership to develop new commercial opportunities. WestLink will continue working towards strengthening the western Canadian technology commercialization industry to help foster increased economic diversification for the region.

For more information, visit their Web site at: www.westlink.ca.

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# WD WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS TO THE WESTERN CANADA BUSINESS SERVICE NETWORK

By Anastasia Lim

No matter how complete a family may be, there is always room for one more. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) welcomes four Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs) to the Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN). The Francophone groups become the fifth members of the network which includes WD offices, Community Futures Development Corporations, Canada Business Service Centres and offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative.

FEDOs are independent, not-for-profit organizations governed by volunteer boards of directors representative of the province, with a mandate for Francophone community economic development. They include La Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique, La Chambre économique de l'Alberta, Le Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan, and Le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba.

WD is committed to enhancing the vitality of English and French minority language communities in Canada and assisting in their development on the economic and community fronts. WD also made a commitment to pursue an inclusive approach to business development in the West.

In the last few years, WD and FEDOs have supported the economic development needs of the French speaking communities in Western Canada. Past discussions with Francophone communities suggested that, for both language and demographic reasons, the existing WCBSN partners did not have targeted products or enhanced services to provide Francophones with a level of service comparable to service being delivered to other clients. In acknowledgement of this service delivery gap, a provincial economic development organization was established in each province. FEDOs currently provide a comparable type and level of service as the other network partners.

Inclusion in the network is a natural evolution in WD's support of the Francophone Economic Development Organizations, which began in 1996. FEDOs will now participate as integral members of the Western Canada Business Service Network, and explore ways of working together with other partners to provide the best possible service to western Canadians.

Through a strategic initiative, WD will fund the operating costs of the FEDOs over a three-year period ending March 31, 2004. This core funding ensures ongoing services in a publicly accessible site; the availability of materials and resources for the public; the availability of staff to provide program referrals, training and business counselling; business development advice; and access to financing.

Some of the services available to Francophone entrepreneurs will include:

- small business information;
- referral to government programs;
- information sessions, workshops and exhibits to strengthen the skills of Francophone entrepreneurs and to allow them to explore business opportunities; and
- business management skill development, including marketing and bookkeeping.

As the newest member of the WCBSN family, the Francophone Economic Development Organizations are a valuable addition that helps to ensure that all entrepreneurs in Western Canada have access to the programs and services they need to succeed and grow.

#### For more information about your local FEDO, contact:

La Chambre économique de l'Alberta

(780) 414-6125 or 1-888-414-6123

La Société de développement économique de la Colombiebritannique

(604) 732-3534 or 1-877-732-3534

Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM)

(204) 925-2320 or 1-800-990-2332

Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS) (306) 566-6000

# ACCES WEST

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

October - December 2001

# THE SMALL BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

Contrary to popular belief, small business has a lot to teach big business. While big companies are downsizing, the small business sector is growing and creating jobs.

#### Small Business Survival Mode

In order to survive and succeed in today's competitive marketplace, small businesses work with a sense of urgency. This survival mode drives not only the owner, but the employees as well, to make the company a success.

Many big businesses have forgotten that they became successful by using many of the tactics of a small business. They often become so large and bureaucratic that employees lose sight of how they relate to the company's business and its success, leading to complacency and unproductive activity.

#### Job Description Versatility

Providing employees with a variety of responsibilities in their jobs gives the small business owner the advantage over big business where employees are usually given narrowly defined job descriptions.

Small businesses typically rely on the versatility of their employees to handle a range of tasks. Cross training increases the overall skills of the business's workforce and allows its employees to acquire new skills and contribute to its success.

Big business has been slow to recognize the importance of cross training and as a result many employees in a big company can work their entire career in only one or two different jobs. Skill sets can become obsolete or overly abundant, resulting in downsizing and layoffs.

#### Reliance on Creativity

As a matter of survival, small businesses rely on creativity to constantly improve. The most effective people in a small business are those who take on a project and complete it successfully using their own instincts, inventiveness, creativity and dedication.

Bureaucratic processes within big business often stifle the ability of staff to see changes within a system. Big companies can take a page from the small business owner and encourage their staff to be creative and voice ways of improving the way the company does things.

By sidestepping the small business supplier or contractor, big business may be overlooking valuable talent that could assist their company to succeed. Because of the survival instinct of the small business owner, they could realize cost savings, unique business solutions and improved client service for products and services they might have received from another big business that isn't reliant on their business.

Don't dismiss small business offhand. They have advantages big business can't compete with!



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Canada

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## Access West

October - December 2001

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online

# A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE Ron J. Duhamel



Ron J. Duhamel Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Francophonie) Working with western Canadian small and medium-sized businesses to help them succeed is a priority for Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). And, there is no more appropriate time than Small Business Week to recognize the accomplishments of the small business entrepreneur.

Small Business Week is celebrated across Canada the week of October 21-27<sup>th</sup>. Across the West, and throughout the country, small businesses will be honoured in their communities for going that extra mile in order to succeed. In addition to

showing a profit, being a success can mean involvement in the community — sharing their expertise through mentoring programs, working with schools or volunteering their time with non-profit groups.

WD and its partners in the Western Canada Business Service Network participate in many of these events to honour worthy entrepreneurs who deserve recognition for their contribution to the economic welfare of the communities they serve.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and Western Economic Diversification Canada, I invite you to join me in saluting successful small business owners for their perseverance, dedication and hard work. Their contribution to the economy of Western Canada ensures its continued growth and prosperity.

## ON THE PATH TO INNOVATION

# WD projects identify new innovation opportunities for Western Canada

by Pamela Roy

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has recently been involved in a number of research initiatives that encourage and support innovation, while leading to a better understanding of economic needs and policies in Western Canada.

One example was a series of workshops held during this past May and June entitled, *Shaping the Future of Health Research and Economic Development in Western Canada*. The workshops, held in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Vancouver, sparked discussion about opportunities for health research and economic development in the West.

Led by Dr. Henry Friesen, former head of the Medical Research Council of Canada and current chair of Genome Canada, the workshops were designed to bring together many of Western Canada's leading health and medical researchers, health institutes, and federal and provincial stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaboration and investment in the growing medical and health research sectors.

Dr. Friesen presented a vision of Canada as a world leader in health/medical research, health care and health industry development, and that Western Canada was the pacesetter with the most dynamic and innovative strategies to achieve global leadership in this sector. With Western Canada poised to become a world-class leader in health research and technology, the workshops were an opportunity to bring the region one step closer by determining what must be done to make the vision a reality.

Ron J. Duhamel, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Francophonie), challenged workshop participants to "reach consensus on the initiatives to be undertaken to strengthen our health research and commercialization activities in Western Canada."

In keeping with the Government of Canada's efforts to ensure that Canada is well positioned in the global economy and that the country is proactive when it comes to critical issues like health research, the findings of these workshops will support



Minister Duhamel at May 2001 workshop in Winnipeg, Shaping the Future of Health Research and Economic Development in Western Canada. The workshop was part of a series held in the four western provinces to explore opportunities for health research and economic development in the West.

the building of a strong, innovative and knowledge-based economy for the future.

Other current research reports or projects funded in whole or in part by WD include:

- Looking West: A Survey of Western Canadians, a look at where western Canadians would like to see the West in 2020.
- A Study of Western Canadian Research Infrastructure, an examination of the existing research and development capacity in Western Canada.
- A Portrait of Small Business Growth and Employment in Western Canada, a survey of trends in small business over the past 10 years and information on relevant issues relating to small business ownership.
- Guidelines for Federal Policy Priorities in Urban Areas, an assessment of the Government of Canada's role in addressing the opportunities and challenges facing urban centres.

To obtain a copy of these reports, contact Nicole Thivierge by e-mail at nicole.thivierge@wd.gc.ca or visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.

# More Ways to Serve You – Electronic Tax Services

by Sue Sohnle, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

The Canada
Customs and
Revenue Agency
(CCRA) is continually
looking for ways to
improve services for small
business by introducing new
filing and payment options. In
conjunction with traditional paper
filing, CCRA has a variety of
electronic, Internet and automated
telephone filing methods that offer...

Convenience — most on-line and automated telephone services are available extended evenings and weekend hours.

Security — the privacy of your data is of utmost importance and CCRA uses robust security methods, including encryption and firewalls.

Immediate confirmation — the assurance that your return or payment has been received.

Lower cost — electronic filing methods reduce printing, handling, postage and storage costs, and most direct services are offered free of charge. Costs may apply for services provided by provincial registries, financial institutions or where commercial software is required.

Faster processing — refunds are often issued quicker, especially using direct deposit.

Integrated service — simplified registration and filing procedures by partnering with different levels of government to provide on-line single-window services, eliminating duplication.

#### **New CCRA Service Initiatives**

Business Registration On-line — integrated on-line service lets you register for a Business Number and CCRA accounts.

GST/HST TELEFILE — allows business clients to file GST/HST returns by phone (for returns only with a nil balance or refund of \$10,000 or less). Look on your personalized GST/HST return for a TELEFILE Access Code.

TeleReply – employers can call 1-800-959-2256 to advise if they have no payroll deductions remittance to make during a remittance period.

Fillable forms – the CCRA Web site contains fillable forms. Instead of completing forms by hand, enter your data on-screen, print and submit the paper copy.

Electronic payments — pay your business taxes and file electronically through your financial institution's telephone and Internet banking services (current list of participating institutions is available on the CCRA Web site).

#### **Sole Proprietorships**

Programs designed for individuals may also be useful to unincorporated businesses that file a Statement of Business Activities with their personal tax returns.

Instalment payments — many sole proprietors pay tax in quarterly instalments. Contact Client Services at 1-800-959-8281 to set up pre-authorized payments or for more information.

NETFILE — most unincorporated small businesses can file their personal tax returns, including Statement of Business Activity, over the Internet using commercially available software.

#### Other Services

Tables on Diskette (TOD) — a stand-alone computer program that calculates payroll deductions for all pay

periods, provinces and territories. Download the program from our Web site or order the diskette free of charge.

Magnetic-Media — magnetic-media filing lets you send computer-generated diskettes, tapes or cartridges instead of sending paper copies of year-end information returns such as T4s.

Publications — most CCRA guides and forms are available on the Internet, or place your order on-line for paper copies.

For more information on CCRA programs and services, visit their Web site at: www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/eservices, or call the Business Enquiries line at 1-800-959-5525, weekdays from 8:15 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

# PASS IT ALONG! Access West is for western Canadian businesses!

If you're in business in the West or wanting to start a business, *Access West* is designed with you in mind.

Many businesses subscribe to magazines to provide something for their clients to read in reception areas while waiting for appointments. Ensure that *Access West* is among those publications! It's free of charge.

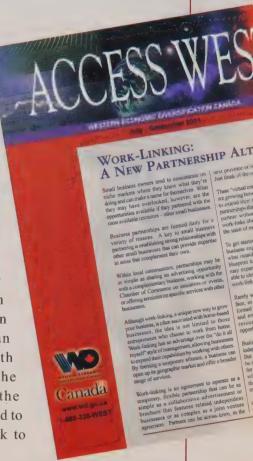
Clients or visitors to your business from your community may be unfamiliar with Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and will find the business information and updates on WD's programs or services available to western Canadian businesses of interest.

Or...if you've read the newsletter and no longer need it, don't throw it away. Pass it along to another business entrepreneur.

Access West is also available on-line at www.wd.gc.ca. If you are one of the new age entrepreneurs who enjoy on-line newsletters, this feature is ideal for you. Just click on the Access West button on the front page to link with the most current issue. Back issues are also available.

On-line subscription services allow readers to update their Access West subscription when it is most convenient for them. Add a new subscription, update your mailing address or convert your subscription to the on-line version (vou'll receive e-mail notice with information about the current issue when the newsletter has been loaded to the Web site, with a link to Access West).

While visiting the WD Web site, check out the many features and business tools that are available.



# IN SEARCH OF SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING?

Accessing capital is vital to the success of business. For many Canadian small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) getting the money needed to remain competitive and profitable may be the most difficult challenge they face.

Traditional financial sources have not been terribly receptive to SMEs when it comes to providing loans or even a line of credit. Why?

They may have a great business idea and are extremely talented, but have no business experience or collateral. Simply put, SMEs are risky and hard to evaluate.

So what do you do when you need additional cash to start or grow your business? Most entrepreneurs turn to the banks; many look to personal loans as a back door alternative when seeking financing for a small business venture. But banks may not be the best or most viable financing solution. Fortunately, there are options.

Venture capital in Canada is on the rise. If you have an excellent business plan that shows a high rate of return and a strong management team, you may be able to tap into venture capital.

More recently, angel investors are finding a place in the financial marketplace. An angel investor is a private investor, often someone who has successfully run their own company and is willing to invest in business startup. The key advantage is that they are often well connected in the business world and can offer good advice based on knowledge and experience.



In addition, federal and provincial government departments offer programs and services for small business.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has created alternative sources of capital for small and medium-sized businesses by working closely with financial institutions to offer specialized loan programs in the areas of knowledge and growth,

information technology and telecommunications, and agricultural value-added processing. In addition, WD has developed a number of micro loan programs in urban centres that focus on loans for small businesses. These programs provide patient and flexible debt capital on terms especially suited to the unique needs and cashflow requirements of these businesses. WD's Client Service Officers also offer assistance with developing and refining business plans, completing technology reviews and preparing other documentation required by a lending institution.

Specialized loans are also available through Community Futures Development Corporations, Women's Enterprise Initiative offices and Francophone Economic Development Organizations throughout the West.

For more information about financing options available through WD or its partners in the Western Canada Business Service Network, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our Web site at: http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/finance/xnetwork.html, which also includes links to other financing sources.

# ACCESS

## MANITOBA

October - December 2001

# TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM – K9 STORM THAT IS!

by Sue Murray

Former Winnipeg Police K9 Officer Jim Slater and his wife, Glori, are truly enthusiastic about the direction their small business has been taking over the last few years. Offering unique canine body armor, **K9 Storm Inc.** has sought out customers beyond the Canadian border and is developing into a successful international venture with clients around the world.

They credit the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC) for a good deal of help with the start-up end of their business. The C/MBSC provided invaluable business information and networking opportunities, according to the Slaters, including market research, export rules and regulations, as well as introductions to commercial contacts.

After more than a decade as a canine officer in Manitoba's capital, Jim recognized a need for better ways of protecting police dogs on the job. Slater set out to design a canine ballistic body armor that provides working police dogs with custom-fitted protection and built-in specialty harnesses.

"In addition to the double panel protection for the chest and heart area, the built-in harnesses are one of the most appealing features," says Jim. "They allow the vests to be used in non-lethal dragline extractions (getting a suspect out of a small hiding place), searches, tracking and rappelling from cliffs or even helicopters."



Police dog wearing K9 Storm vest during a training session.

The patented vests also provide the protection needed in volatile situations where the canine team is in the line of fire or where other weapons are a threat.

According to Jim, the K9 Storm vests are now being used in approximately 40 U.S. states and eight Canadian provinces, and are being exported to five other countries.

K9 Storm Inc. is again working with the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre, along with the International Trade Centre, to provide tactical canine protection for handlers in police forces throughout Europe and the global marketplace.

### ACCESS MANITOBA

## BEING PART OF THE BIG PICTURE



Under WD's First Jobs in Science and Technology Program, Minnedosa-based Canadian Photonic Labs was able to hire recent graduate Luke Filipecki to work on its hardware and embedded micro-controller design team.

by Sue Murray

Mark Wahoski is eager to build up his Minnedosa-based imaging systems business to capture more emerging international markets and meet the growing demand at home. But he needed more knowledgeable people on staff to work on developing the new products his clients require.

With help from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Wahoski hired a recent computer engineering graduate for a three-year period under the **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program**, giving both his company, **Canadian Photonic Labs**, and the university graduate a much-needed boost in the right direction.

"The First Jobs program is an all round win-win situation," says Wahoski. "Not only does it provide a young person a

'first job' in a chosen career, but the program provides the firm with expertise and ultimately, in the company's case, helps bring a new product to market."

Western Canadian companies with fewer than 250 employees, as well as industry associations or similar business networks, can apply for funding support under the First Jobs program to hire a recent science and technology graduate for one to three years to adopt or develop new technology. WD covers up to a maximum of \$37,500 of a graduate's salary over a three year project.

Wahoski's first experience with the First Jobs program came in 1999 when the company had only two employees. WD support allowed Canadian Photonic Labs to hire a young graduate to develop software for new markets in the research, educational and scientific sectors. That software engineer is now a full-time employee, and the company has grown to 10 full-time and five part-time positions.

The company continues to break new ground developing laser-based imaging systems for an elite group of customers, pushing their technology to the forefront. And growth continues to be explosive. Revenues in the year 2000 were up 500% over 1999, while the year 2001 continues to set sales records over last year.

The company boasts 80 to 90 per cent of sales heading for the export market, largely in the U.S. The firm also has sales representatives in Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, China, Israel, France, Australia and India.

With a second graduate working with Canadian Photonic Labs' hardware and embedded micro-controller design team, the company president foresees more fruitful technological developments for his company. As a forward thinking businessman, Wahoski has a vision for his company: to become one of the world's premier imaging companies.

## ACCESS MANITOBA

# On the Road – Bringing Service to Your Doorstep

by Sue Murray

The last thing residents of the Sandy Bay Indian Reserve expected to see driving into their community this summer was a bright white pickup truck making its way carefully down the dirt road, hauling a long trailer emblazoned with the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC) logo.

Curtis Colon, coordinator of the C/MBSC's Aboriginal Business Network, got the wheels in motion – literally – and arranged to bring the services of the C/MBSC to their doorsteps after the Dakota-Ojibway Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) had shown an interest.

"The community didn't think we'd actually show up," says Colon. "They were amazed that we drove all the way up there. The mobile regional office – the truck – allows us to reach so many more people across Manitoba who are interested in starting up their own small business."

Colon and his colleague, Jason Lacasse, made the 200 kilometre journey to present a small business development seminar to an audience of 18–35 year olds. Lacasse indicated the presentation was well received and many participants were surprised at the range of information available through the C/MBSC. Many also commented about how easy it is to get a wealth of useful information through the C/MBSC and its one-stop-shop concept.

Much like its 22 office-based counterparts located across the province, the mobile service center provides a whole range of free business information for those starting up or operating



Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre mobile unit delivers business information to clients in rural communities.

a small business – from which forms and licenses are required to operate your business, to how to export your product.

According to Colon, the C/MBSC is now planning a trip to Thompson to present a hands-on approach of teaching youth how to develop a business plan. The presentation will involve high school students working in groups to develop a business idea and plan, which will then be presented to all participants at the end of the exercise.

This practical approach is aimed at giving young people a taste of the business world, and to spark an interest to further explore a career in the business field.

Both the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre and the Dakota-Ojibway CFDC operate through a partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada.

# SMALL BUSINESS WEEK EVENTS – October 22 - 27, 2001

Watch for these events taking place during Small Business Week. For more information about the events, contact WD at (204) 983-0697 or toll-free at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

October 2	Successful Business Luncheon - Manitoba Quality Network (QNET)
October 16	Quality Month Gala Dinner (QNET)
October 20	Small Business Week opening event in Manitoba
October 22	WD Seminar: Service - Moment by
Ootobou 24	Moment - Part 1 (tentative)
October 24	WD Seminar: Selling to the Federal Government (tentative)
October 24	Smart Awards Banquet (Young Entre- preneur Award winners to be recognized) held at the Fort Garry Hotel in the
	Provencher Room.
October 25	WD Seminar - Business Planning
October 25	Business Development Bank of Canada,
	Winnipeg Branch, reception 4:00-7:00 p.m.
	(by invitation)
October 31	Portals to the Future Open Doors to Success Conference (QNET)

#### Also:

- The Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC) will be holding seminars on Starting a Small Business, Finding a Business Opportunity, Developing a Business Plan, and others.
- Through its Aboriginal Business Services Network, C/MBSC will be holding a Youth Entrepreneurship event in Thompson.
- Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines will be holding a Youth Entrepreneurship event and a marketing network seminar.

#### Frequently asked business questions:

- 1. How do I start a business?
- 2. Which license or permits do I need for my business?
- 3. What funding is available to help me start my business?
- 4. Where do I find suppliers?
- 5. How do I export?

Find out the answers to your business questions or request information from Western Economic Diversification Canada or the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre on-line at: http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/webcomments/questions.asp or http://www.cbsc.org/manitoba/index.cfm?name=mailus.

Or you can contact us at:

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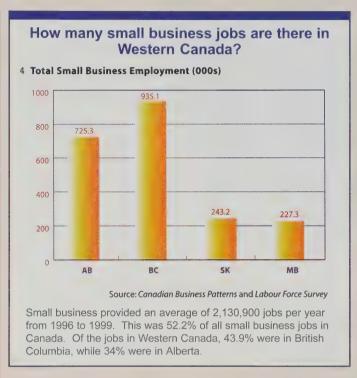
# It's a great time to be a small business owner in Western Canada

by Quinn Nicholson

Over the last decade, Canada's western provinces have all seen a boom in the growth of small businesses. That's the main finding of a report released by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) entitled, A Portrait of Small Business Growth and Employment in Western Canada. The report traces trends in the small business community through the 1990s, examining how small business has changed in 27 different regions across the western provinces. It also includes analyses of small business growth in the West, a look at where western high-tech centres are developing, and profiles of age, education and gender distribution in small businesses.

The Honourable Ron J. Duhamel, Minister of Veteran Affairs and Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Francophonie) said: "By providing information on small business growth rates, job creation, self-employment, sub-regional development patterns, sectoral distribution and small business ownership, this study provides a valuable contribution to people running small businesses or helping to formulate small business policy."

Nataliya Rylska and Edward Chambers, members of the University of Alberta's Western Centre for Economic Research, researched the report. Chambers points out: "Not only is small business 40 per cent higher in the West, but entrepreneurial activity in the region, measured by new business formations per capita, displays a similar



difference. And, employment in small business entities accounts for one of every two jobs in the region."

Interested in obtaining a copy? The report is available throughout the West at Community Futures Development Corporation offices and Canada Business Service Centres, or can be obtained directly from any WD office or by calling 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

#### Highlights of the Report

- The number of small businesses in Western Canada per thousand population is 40% higher than in the rest of the country.
- Enterprises with less than five employees account for 80% of all business entities.
- During the 1990s, the number of small businesses in Western Canada grew by 26,000 annually.
- In the West, about 32% of small businesses produce goods and 68% produce services. This is significantly different from the rest of the country where 20% produce goods and 80% produce services.
- Self-employment is a larger share of total employment in Western Canada than in other parts of the country.
- Small business births per member of the labour force size are 42% higher than in other parts of the country.
- Small business numbers per member of the labour force size are highest in the more rural regions of Western Canada.
- There are two self-employed men for every self-employed woman, but the number of self-employed women is growing at twice the rate of men.

## Entrepreneurship



Parent Seed Farms is a partnership of brothers Rénald and Norbert, and Rénald's son, Robert.

Tag (R) and Catherine (L) Goulet of Fabjob.com help make people's dreams come true.

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive in the West!

An anonymous quote reads, "Nothing big ever comes from being small." But if you talk to these small business entrepreneurs, they'll disagree.

With only 38 employees, Parent Seed Farms Ltd. of St. Joseph, Manitoba, has experienced huge success in seed production and cleaning since 1966 when the business started out in one small Quonset shed. Rénald Parent took over the operation from his father in 1971. To meet changing market requirements, Parent expanded its product line to include speciality crops for the edible food markets such as beans, lentils and peas, and bird feed products, in addition to cereal seeds.

"Our focus has never been to take a share of the larger markets. We like to work with small and medium-sized buyers in niche markets," indicated Rénald. By selling to these discriminating buyers and maintaining a quality control program that is second to none, Parent Seed Farms has been able to maintain annual export sales of approximately \$25 million — 90 per cent of its sales are in the export market. Edible foods make up 90 per cent of the sales.

Parent Seed Farms credits some of its export success to assistance they received from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). Two recent graduates were hired under WD's International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) to help the company expand its markets in Europe, the Middle East, Russian block countries and, more recently, into Central and South America.

"The success of this company can be attributed to management and the strong support from our staff," concluded Rénald.

Entrepreneurship is in the blood of sisters Tag and Catherine Goulet. They each bring business experience to the rapidly growing Alberta dot com success – Fabjob.com Ltd. Catherine has always been an entrepreneur, says Tag, while she has been a speaker and author. Combined, they bounced around business ideas over coffee and realized there was a market for information on careers that are rarely advertised.

"Fabjob.com is about helping people make their dreams come true," indicated Tag of the cyberspace bookstore for jobseekers. "Each e-book is like a friend that takes your hand and shows you how to break into popular careers such as acting or how to publish a children's book."

Like an inventor, being a small business has meant that the Goulets have had a chance to make their ideas a reality, and quickly. They toss ideas back and forth, and then just do it. It means more risks, but that's part of the small business experience that big companies may miss in the many layers of management and approval processes.

Very early in the business planning stage, Tag and Catherine linked up with WD Client Service Officer Sherry Moir. "Sherry was a totally awesome business coach that had a 'tough love' approach we needed to help us focus and get serious about business."

Only a year and a half after Fabjob.com went on-line, the company employs eight contractors who work from their homes in the Calgary area, and has enlisted very successful authors from across Canada and the U.S. who share their knowledge on how to get hired and get ready for exciting careers.

If you're in Regina and want to enjoy a fine dining experience, visit

## E SPIRIT OF THE WEST

The Creek in Cathedral Bistro and say hello to Lorna Cosper.

At age 51, Lorna decided to pursue her love of gourmet cooking after attending a small business development presentation in May 2000. WD's Christopher Doll stayed afterward to answer her questions and continues to provide individual business support, including helping her establish contacts and providing financial advice.

Today, The Creek has the prestigious distinction of "star" status in the 2001-02 edition of "Where to Eat in Canada," an exclusive listing of Canada's top eating establishments. The restaurant serves continental cuisine from its location in the city's ethnically diverse and historical Cathedral area.

One of the challenges for Lorna is dealing with industry suppliers who aren't prepared to service small restaurants like The Creek. She spends her mornings grocery shopping and looking for everything from wooden spoons to napkins, but it's all worth the effort when her clients walk away happy.

"The business keeps me busy and it can be exhausting; it requires perseverance and the ability to adapt. It's a constant learning experience," Lorna enthused. The hard work is all part of the business she says, adding that she intends to stay a "small" business. "The Bistro is like having people in my own dining room and sharing my love of fine food. Expanding would take away that appeal. We're doing very well at what we're doing, and good things come in small packages."

As a youth, Paul Simpson worked on trawlers and in fisheries along the B.C. coast. He went on to attend university and then worked in Japan, where he met his business partner, Matt Salo. Together, they returned to B.C. and their true love,

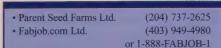
the sea. While doing market research, they discovered a huge market looking for better quality, fresh mussels.

In 1997 they went into the aquaculture business on Salt Spring Island, opening Island Sea Farms Inc., a mussel shellfish farm. With a lot of assistance from WD, federal scientists, technologists and research councils, Island Sea Farms now boasts quality mussels that are the best in the world. For discriminating west coast buyers in the U.S. and Canada, the company supplies fresh, plumper mussels at a 30 per cent price premium over those shipped from the east.

WD assisted the partners through the First Jobs in Science and Technology Program, allowing them to hire a recent graduate who adapted oyster/clam hatchery technology for mussel shellfish. "Unbelievably, we went from producing 3-4 million mussel seeds a year to 100 million as a result of this technology," said Paul.

Island Sea Farms is in the forefront of the mussel farming industry in the West. Paul will be looking to WD to help address the challenge of finding hatcheries to grow the mussel seeds and the financing needed to keep growing.

These are just four examples of the entrepreneurial spirit that is thriving in Western Canada. If you have a business idea, but don't know where to go for help, give Western Economic Diversification Canada a call at 1-888-338-WEST (9378). We're here to help western Canadian businesses grow and prosper.



• The Creek in Cathedral Bistro

(306) 352-4448

• Island Sea Farms Inc. (250) 537-4822



Lorna Cosper, owner of The Creek in Cathedral Bistro, with WD Client Service Officer Christopher Doll



Matt Salo (L) and Paul Simpson (R) of Island Sea Farms.

## ARE YOU REALLY LISTENING?



By the Connolly Verburgh Consulting Group

How do you retain strongly dedicated and loyal employees? Each organization is unique and there is no perfect model for creating a *commitment culture*. We often forget that the best way to find out how to keep employees committed is to simply ask them, record their feedback and really listen to what they're saying.

Here are some suggestions for keeping dedicated staff.

Communicate your purpose. Committed employees know what the company's vision is, and that they're part of it. Acknowledge the important role they play in helping you attain your business vision and goals.

Create a "culture of appreciation." If employees are doing the "right" thing, recognize them by saying "thank you" and mean it. Work at creating a culture where this is automatic.

Manage bad performance issues. It is de-motivating for employees to see poor performers (peer or boss) not being dealt with

Communicate, communicate, communicate. Find many and varied ways to communicate what is going on, how the organization is performing and what is happening. If people aren't kept informed, they will fill in the blanks themselves.

*Keep your promises*. In relationships, trust is based on promises kept. In organizations, when promises are broken, trust is damaged.

Demonstrate respect for work/life balance. We are all working incredibly hard. Balancing work and life is an unrelenting challenge for today's organizations and workers. Do what you can to respect work/life balance. Demonstrate understanding and flexibility.

Implement a variety of ways to obtain employee feedback – employee attitude surveys, suggestion boxes, employee project committees to work on specific projects, hire a third party to collect information.

Exit interviews. An overlooked and informative way to find out what is really going on is to have an external person conduct exit interviews. These are best conducted about two weeks after an employee has become a "free agent." Because confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed by using a person external to the company, departed employees may give the "real" reasons to a professional exit interviewer who is objective and unbiased. Often this information is quite different from the reason departing employee's give their manager.

Communicate the values of your organization. Communicate your corporate values when hiring new talent. Write them on small cards, have them laminated and have your employees keep it in their wallet. Next, try to figure out what your employees' values are. Different strategies are necessary to retain an employee who values the excitement of competition versus an employee who values working independently. Try to match your employees' job tasks and responsibilities with their values.

Listen, listen, listen. And when you're done listening, ensure employees know they have been heard and their information or ideas will be followed up and acted upon. Retaining strongly committed and loyal employees requires a lot of hard listening.

Connolly Verburgh Consulting Group is a human resource consulting firm that works with businesses to put the ideas listed here into practice. They specialize in third party exit interview programs, H.R. audits, employee retention and H.R. management programs. They can be contacted at (780) 433-0248.

# TURN CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

By Kevin Lawrence

Business owners dread the customer complaint. But why not turn the negative "complaint" into a positive "opportunity!"

A business can encounter real problems if customers don't complain – it could mean that the customer doesn't feel comfortable about voicing their concerns. Complaints provide a business with the information needed to improve their customer service.

A study by the Strategic Planning Institute on customers' complaints discovered that 96 per cent of the average business' unhappy customers do not complain. At least nine out of 10 of these non-complainers won't do business with the company again. However, of the four per cent who launch a complaint, seven of 10 will return to do business again if their concern has been properly handled, and a staggering 19 out of 20 will do business with the company again if their grievance is dealt with quickly.

Consider using this approach to deal with a customer complaint.

- 1. Don't react or try to defend yourself or your company. Acknowledge the customer's concern, empathize and apologize for the inconvenience. This is not an admission of guilt, but it shows respect and concern.
- 2. Understand the situation and the details surrounding the complaint by asking "venting" questions. This helps customers release their frustrations, while providing insight into why they are upset. Then, asked more questions until they say, "That's it; that's everything." You'll notice the customer will appear more relaxed and their anger should have subsided. You can now deal with them rationally, avoiding arguments.
- **3. Listen** to what the customer is saying as they vent their frustrations, and acknowledge their concerns without comment or defence.

- 4. Paraphrase your understanding of the customer's frustration and its cause. This accomplishes two things you confirm your understanding of their complaint, and the customer will feel truly heard and valued because you cared enough to listen and understand.
- 5. Develop a solution. Suggest a solution that will make your customer happy and resolve the complaint, or ask your customer to recommend a solution. In most cases, customers will demand less that you expect, and they'll usually take responsibility and apologize for the inconvenience.
- **6. Go above and beyond customer expectations.** Resolve the situation immediately and provide solutions that surpass their expectations so they leave more than satisfied.
- 7. Confirm their satisfaction with the solution and thank them for bringing the problem to your attention. Appreciate that they're taking the time and energy to let your company know how to serve them better and keep their business.
- **8.** Customer follow-up. To ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty, call or write a few weeks later to ensure your customer is still happy. They'll be impressed that you care enough to check up.

If you don't ask, you probably won't find out about the problems your customers may be having with your products or services. As a result, you can lose customers and referrals. Dealing with issues head-on will help your business retain its clients and improve chances of new business opportunities through customer referrals. \*

Kevin Lawrence is a business and personal success coach based in Vancouver. As a speaker and author, he works with professional financial advisors to help them build their businesses by increasing referrals and repeat business. Kevin authors two complimentary newsletters, "Successful Life" and "Endless Referrals," that can be accessed through his Web site at: www.kevin-lawrence.com. He can also be reached at (604) 313-2229.

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## CELEBRATING SMALL BUSINESS

Small Business Week celebrations are planned in communities across Canada, October 21-27th, to honour small business

entrepreneurs whose achievements in the past year have been outstanding and whose contributions are vital to the economy of their local communities.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is proud to partner in these celebrations in many

communities across Western Canada. Every year, Small Business Week provides an opportunity to network with those

interested in small business and dedicated to its development through a number of activities such as: conferences, open

> houses, seminars and workshops, luncheons/dinners, business fairs and trade shows, and awards programs to recognize the achievements of small businesses and their impact on the economy.

> For complete details of Small Business Week events happening in your region, contact WD or your

local Chambers of Commerce or Community Futures
Development Corporations. •

Small Business Week is a national celebration of entrepreneurship that was formally adopted in 1981 by the Business Development Bank of Canada with the endorsement of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

## YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS VISIT THE WEST

For the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) will reward young entrepreneurs of outstanding merit at the national launch of Small Business Week in Edmonton.

A young entrepreneur from each province and territory will be presented with an award. The 13 winners are chosen by a panel of judges from the business world, including successful local entrepreneurs and members of local Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce, as well as representatives from the BDC and Export Development Corporation (EDC).

In 1994, the BDC added a new dimension to the Awards by creating the Young Entrepreneurs Mentor Program that matches award winners with a prominent business leader who acts as mentor for one year, sharing knowledge, experience and insight. One young award winner will also receive the EDC's Export Achievement Award.

To learn about the Young Entrepreneur Awards and the nomination process for the Awards, contact the BDC's Web site at: www.bdc.ca.

# ACCES WEST

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

January - March 2002

# Keeping Pace in a Technology-Driven Economy

Business, big or small, needs to be at the top of its game continually to stay competitive in today's global marketplace. E-business has opened the door to worldwide markets and is rapidly becoming the storefront of choice for many consumers looking to avoid the shopping malls.

Today's information and telecommunications technology puts more power into the hands of business. But, a company's success may be hampered by not having the technology and the knowledgeable staff to use it.

Technology is taking giant strides in directions we never even considered 10 years ago. While many businesses and homes are looking at the Internet, new wireless technology is promising even greater rewards. Engineers are finding ways to improve production lines in everything from food processing to the manufacturing of aerospace parts.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is building a world-leading economy driven by innovation, ideas and talent in the

West. Through strategic initiatives and federal-provincial Western Economic Partnership Agreements, WD supports projects ranging from fuel cell research in British Columbia to nanotechnology and proteomics in Alberta, from petroleum research and telehealth in Saskatchewan to filmless radiology and health sciences in Manitoba.

And, to help level the playing field so that small business can access and hire the staff needed to stay competitive, WD developed the **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program.** The program makes it affordable for small and medium-sized enterprises in Western Canada to hire recent graduates of science, technology and engineering programs.

To find out if your business may be eligible for assistance under the First Jobs program or to learn about many of these innovative projects, visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca or call us at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).



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Canada

www.wa.gc.ca

888-338-WEST

## Access West

January - March 2002

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE Ron J. Dubamel



Ron J. Duhamel Minister of Veterans Affairs Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Francophonie) To build higher levels of productivity and a stronger western Canadian presence in national and global markets, we must diversify our resource-based industry and further develop our knowledge-based economy. By fostering an environment where innovative ideas and knowledge are constantly generated and implemented, we set the path for a stronger valued-added economy. The outcome of this will be new products and services, more highly valued jobs, and the achievement of a better quality of life today and into the future.

Innovative research and development in the West has produced important advancements in the fields of telecommunications, agriculture and forestry, health care, genomics and new media. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) fosters a favourable climate for these advancements.

WD is playing an essential role in transforming the West to a knowledge-based economy by coordinating and leading innovation initiatives, as well as encouraging the commercialization of new technologies. It establishes partnerships with industry, academia and various levels of government, and makes strategic investments in priority areas of our economy that will strengthen the Government of Canada's evolving Innovation Agenda.

I invite you to find out how this is happening in this issue of Access West. \*

# Assessing Your Technology Product's Viability

Curtis Gulka of Saskatoon contacted Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) in June 2000 looking for information and expertise. Gulka's company, Verksam Resources Inc., was developing *The Spider*, a product that performs brake and suspension maintenance on semi-trailers. He needed help determining his next steps in the product's development.

Client Service Officer Gord Matheos introduced Gulka to the **Technology Assessment Services** program offered by WD and the Canadian Innovation Centre (CIC). Through this program, WD and the CIC have partnered to provide western Canadian technology owners and developers with credible evaluations of their technology-based products or business ideas. Assessments range from \$895 to \$3,500. With help from WD and the CIC, a business can take advantage of these services for about one-third of the cost.

Gulka used the internationally recognized Critical Factor Assessment to examine 37 key factors necessary for commercial success of his product. "Verksam Resources received an excellent third party review of *The Spider* and a comprehensive assessment of the next steps needed to develop it successfully. It reinforced some of what we already knew and highlighted things we needed to work on."

The assessment is an on-going development tool like a business or marketing plan, indicated Gulka. He uses the assessment to check off items highlighted in the review. *The Spider* is now in the early commercialization stages, with two units already sold.

The CIC also provides **Software Assessments** that help developers with a comprehensive search for relevant information and other products that would be closely competitive. The **Technology Assessment** evaluates technological merits of a new product, process or enabling technology as compared with current practice. And, **Market Review Plus** is a preliminary market assessment consisting of primary and secondary market information, providing Canadian and U.S. market data on subjects relating to the

### **Technology sectors**

- Advanced Manufacturing Technology new manufacturing techniques and machines combined with information technology, microelectronics and new organizational practices in the manufacturing process.
- Information and Communications Technology

   the combination of manufacturing and service
  industries that electronically capture, transmit
  and display data and information.
- Life Science Technology includes biotechnology and medical technologies.
- Climate Change Technology emission reduction technologies that mitigate change in the global atmosphere, such as levels of greenhouse gases.





proposed innovation, such as: market size and trends, market growth and competition.

The Canadian Innovation Centre was founded in 1981 with support from the University of Waterloo and the Government of Canada. The CIC provides SME clients in all regions of Canada with the highest standard of due diligence and plays an integral role in key start-up and funding decisions for some of Canada's most innovative entrepreneurial and small business initiatives.

For more information, consultation and acceptance into the Technology Assessment Services program, contact your regional WD office or call toll-free at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

# Innovat Diversificati

Government realizes that for the West to prosper and succeed in the new knowledge-based economy, we must reduce our reliance on natural resources and invest in innovation. From fisheries to oil and gas, agricultural crops to forestry, new innovative technologies are being developed across the West that will change the way we view these resources.

While broad in scope, many of Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) investments promote the commercialization of technology. In partnership with industry associations, academic institutions, western and national research organizations, provincial governments and other federal government departments and agencies, WD is helping to advance technologies in many exciting arenas.

#### Innovation at work

The properties of today's manufactured products depend on how atoms are arranged. For example, we've learned to rearrange the atoms in coal to make diamonds. At the molecular level, these manufacturing methods are like making things out of LEGO with boxing gloves on.

Soon, *nanotechnology* will let us take off the gloves and snap together the fundamental building blocks of nature easily. As the revolution in computer hardware continues into the next decade, it will allow for the fabrication of an entire new generation of products that are cleaner, stronger, lighter and more precise.

Fuel cells today are a means of generating electricity for applications in power generation plants, portable power for remote recreational and commercial applications, homes and transportation. Basically, a fuel cell converts the chemical energy of a fuel, such as hydrogen, directly into electricity through an electrochemical process and

produces the byproducts water and oxygen. This technology produces power more efficiently, with less pollution than gas engines for example.

*Synchrotron light* is a magnification tool for pure and applied research in a wide

variety of areas. Scientists can

analyze materials with higher accuracy and precision than



# **Builds**in the West

Technology, knowledge and management revolutions are taking place and specific applications, such as *telehealth*, offer ways to deliver health services and programs more widely and more effectively. The ability to transfer health information, specifically clinical

data, across the provinces and territories will remove distance and access barriers, and help create a system that is integrated around patient needs.

Genome sciences use facilities for DNA micro-assays, DNA sequencing, proteomics instrument prototyping in the areas of agriculture, infectious diseases, age-related human diseases. health diagnosis development and gene data analysis. This science can translate into novel products in the health, agri-food and aquaculture sectors, or new therapies for cancer for instance.

Nuclear and non-nuclear environmental and contaminant research are combining environmental analysis technology and risk management skills for the nuclear industry to the marketplace. Specialized research is also developing detection devices for use in international nuclear safety inspections that ensure spent nuclear fuel rods remain in storage and are not used in unauthorized research and weapons development.

Building on the earlier success of advanced computer-aided design (CAD) and engineering (CAE) tools, *virtual reality research* is providing a competitive edge through the use of visualization technology to improve product design and

lower costs, and give engineers the ability to design, test and simulate in an interactive 3D environment. This technology has already been used to produce special effects images for some of our favorite sci-fi movies.

WD's investments in innovation take into account provincial, pan-western and federal opportunities and priorities. Many of these investments have been made through existing programs, as well as strategic initiatives and Western Economic Partnership Agreements to lever matching funds provincial from governments and private sector. Since 1998, WD has invested approximately \$440 million in over 2,500 innovative projects.

The new media sector presently employs over 3,000 in Western Canada, with the potential to expand by over 50 per cent in the next two years...

As WD continues its work of strengthening the western innovation system, new challenges must be met. The Department will facilitate early stage investment for technology firms to further support and help build an innovative knowledge-based economy.

For information about these or other innovative projects currently underway in Western Canada, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

# Innovating Opportunity for the Small Business Community

During a recent interview, we asked the Hon. Brian Tobin, Minister of Industry, for his thoughts on how small businesses can take advantage of innovation.



Minister Tobin talks about e-business, a significant opportunity for the Canadian small business community.

Industry Minister Brian Tobin recently met with representatives from Industry Portfolio Offices to discuss issues important in the different regions of Canada.

At Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) the recent report, *A Portrait of Small Business Growth and Employment in Western Canada*, served to reinforce that small business is a big engine for economic development in West, and across Canada. WD's Pamela Roy asked Minister Tobin what his vision would be for how small business could take advantage of the Government of Canada's Innovation Agenda — one of the most ambitious initiatives that the Industry Portfolio has ever embarked on.

Minister Tobin indicated that Industry Portfolio Offices from across the country were doing a very good job of moving Canada in the direction of becoming very smart, very connected. He acknowledged that in the area of adaptation of new technology, notably e-business, large Canadian corporations are doing quite well and are compatible with their United States rivals. The U.S. is considered by many a benchmark for Canadian business and it's that jurisdiction against which we measure our success.

Canadian mediumsized businesses are a little behind their U.S. counterparts, and small businesses have not fully bought into the opportunities available to them through the World Wide Web. "In my mind, that is beginning to change, but not rapidly enough. If we talk about creating an innovative society, efficient and competitive society, there has to be a cultural shift right across Canadian society generally, but in the business context.

"If we talk about creating an innovative society, an efficient and competitive society, there has to be a cultural shift right across Canadian society."

certainly with small business," commented Minister Tobin.

"One of the reasons for looking at high-speed broadband as an important technology for Canada's future, for example, is to ensure that we make it available everywhere in Canada. This technology needs to be available to Canadians in a useful format that allows for the movement of data quickly, using video and audio data bits in an effective and commercially-appropriate manner."

He added that small business needs to be able to do business over the Internet and handle business-to-business transactions in order to stay competitive in the rapidly growing global marketplace. "E-business is going to be a significant opportunity for the Canadian small business community in the future," concluded Minister Tobin. \*

# ACCESS

January - March 2002

BRITISH COLUMBIA

## The New Media Innovation Centre

by Dave Morgan

With more than 400 people from Vancouver's vibrant new media community in attendance, the **New Media Innovation Centre** (**NewMIC**) officially opened its new 25,000 square foot state-of-the-art research facility at the Harbour Centre in downtown Vancouver on October 18, 2001. Close to 40 organizations, members and affiliates of NewMIC, were on hand to demonstrate new technologies and applications. Students and professors from five of B.C.'s premier academic organizations presented the latest in new media research, and guests had the chance to experience NewMIC's \$2 million **Virtual Reality Lab**, funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

NewMIC is a groundbreaking collaboration between industry, academia and government that focuses on the research, development and commercialization of cutting-edge new media technology. As an interdisciplinary centre, players in the new media industry can share resources, learn from one another and push the boundaries of how we think about new media.

NewMIC's goals are ambitious. They will help position British Columbia and Canada as world-class players on the new media stage, and will play a key role in increasing the quantity and quality of researchers and faculty members in Western Canada by helping attract the best talent to the West and by training the next generation. And, it will create job opportunities in the growing field of new media by developing new technology

and spin-off companies from ideas cultivated at NewMIC, and by supporting and incubating emerging technology businesses.

NewMIC President and CEO Alan Winter says, "NewMIC is a new concept that started a little more than a year ago with nothing more than a vision and a business plan. We wanted to become an internationally recognized centre for new media innovation and commercialization, a place where people from different sectors with different expertise could share ideas and resources to put Western Canada on the new media map. The foundation is in place. We have commitment, excitement and a facility where everyone can come together. Now we are ready to deliver."

Most recently, Sony Corporation of America committed \$1.5 million into the Centre over the next five years to sponsor a newly established research cluster in Rich Media Entertainment. In this cluster, industry and academic researchers will work together on technologies aimed at delivering rich media (the convergence of audio, video, graphics, animation and digital pictures) to the home.

NewMIC has received \$21 million in committed funding over the past year and a half. To find out more about the about the New Media Innovation Centre and the Virtual Reality Lab, visit their web site at www.newmic.com.

### ACCESS BRITISH COLUMBIA

# The Aerospace Industry in We



Craig Fulton, Supplier Development, WD – BC, at the Team Cormorant – Acro Aerospace Helicopter announcement, Richmond, April 2000.

by Craig Fulton

Since 1988, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has been a strong supporter of Western Canada's aerospace sector and views the aerospace industry as vital to the diversification of the economy of Western Canada.

The western Canadian aerospace industry employs some of the most sophisticated technologies and production methods

available. Companies offer a diverse range of capabilities from precision machining to the fabrication of composite parts, from aircraft design to robotic assembly. Western Canadian aerospace companies have developed expertise in a number of specialty areas such as the modification of aircraft, air ambulances and firefighting, and in remotesensing and satellite data capture applications.

In the West, this industry has enjoyed strong growth over the past decade and now ranks as a major strategic industry fuelling export growth, creating highly skilled jobs and long-term employment. Western Canadian companies represent 20 per cent of the total Canadian aerospace manufacturing industries, with combined sales revenues exceeding \$3 billion.

As one of the founding supporters of Air Show North America, the largest aerospace tradeshow in North America, WD provided financial support for each annual event. Sponsorship of these events has enabled aerospace companies in Western

Canada, specifically B.C., to meet with large multinational aerospace firms and promote their services. "B.C. companies have benefited in a number of ways from the intervention Western Economic Diversification Canada," said Andrew Huige, Executive Director of the Aerospace **Industry Association** of British Columbia. "WD facilitates a wide variety of projects and has been critical in helping our members



New Cormorant SAR (Search and Rescue

develop new products, customers and markets."

Prior to 1995, WD provided a number of aerospace companies with loans under the Western Diversification Program (WDP) that enabled them to undertake research and development,

### ACCESS BRITISH COLUMBIA

# n Canada Spreading Its Wings

adopt new technologies, purchase new capital equipment, develop new products and improve their productivity. In its early years, WD's International Marketing Initiative and Quality Assurance Assistance Program greatly benefited the

oute to CFB Comox over Lake Okanagan.

the West. These programs helped aerospace companies institute quality assurance programs and enhance their competitiveness, and to penetrate foreign markets.

aerospace industry in

Ted Croft, president of Pyrotek Heat Treating Ltd. of Langley, indicated, "WD's assistance played an integral part in Pyrotek's plan to provide aluminum heat treating services to the aerospace industry of British

Columbia. Their continued support of our growing client base is both welcome and required."

Today, WD offers a hiring program called the **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program** which has been used by

the aerospace industry to facilitate the hiring of recent graduates. Under this program, WD helps to cover part of the salary costs of hiring a graduate with the skills necessary to complete science or technology related projects.

WD ensures that western aerospace companies obtain maximum benefit from the Government of Canada's **Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) program**. Industrial and regional benefits require prime contractors on Major Crown Projects (projects worth over \$100 million) to generate economic activity (through subcontracts, purchases, technology transfer, investment, etc.) in all regions of the country.

"In its efforts to identify industrial offsets against Canadian contracts awarded abroad, WD has elevated Spectrum's visibility within large Defence prime contractors such as EADS, Thales and Boeing," says Dan Simard, director of strategic programs at Spectrum Signal Processing. "Although Spectrum has a historical relationship with these companies, industrial offsets represent important leverage into new and significant business opportunities."

WD organizes prime contractor tours and briefing events to promote western aerospace firms to large multi-national companies and exposes prime contactors to as many qualified small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as possible. These events provide advice and information to stakeholders and are for the purpose of showcasing the capabilities and world-class expertise of western aerospace firms.

## ACCESS BRITISH COLUMBIA



The Department has played a key role in a number of major government purchases. For example:

- Canadian Search and Rescue Helicopter, resulting in \$86 million for the West. B.C. companies such as ACRO Aerospace Inc. and CMI were beneficiaries.
- Radarsat II contract contains direct IRB benefits of \$102 million for MacDonald Dettwiler and Associates

   the successful bidder.
- C-130 Tactical Transport Tankers contract worth \$360 million with over \$50 million awarded to a western firm.
- Current Major Crown Projects in which WD is involved include: the Maritime Helicopter project, and CF-18 and C-140 modernization programs.

WD also publishes the *Western Canadian Aerospace Industry Capabilities Guide* every two years. This guide is used extensively by prime contractors and multi-national firms who have IRB obligations to identify potential subcontractors.

WD seeks to enhance the competitiveness and growth of the aerospace industry by partnering with the aerospace industry in Western Canada and helping western SMEs pursue market opportunities both domestically and internationally. Aerospace is a leading-edge industry in the West and WD will continue to support this sector in keeping with its mandate of promoting the diversification of the economy of Western Canada. \*

# A Business Vision with IMPACT!

by Shawna Bourke Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association

Some entrepreneurs' dream of becoming a household name. For Debbie Travis, it actually happened. She has gone from painting neighbours' homes to having a successful production company and her own television show — Debbie Travis' Painted House. Travis has become one of Canada's best-known businesswomen and truly a household name.

So what does it take to achieve your entrepreneurial dream? Find out at the **Pan West Conference for Women Entrepreneurs**. This 'must attend' event for women business owners will be held April 24-26, 2002, at the Westin Hotel in Calgary, Alberta. As the keynote speaker, Travis will be sharing her entrepreneurial journey and insights on how to maintain the integrity of your business vision.

Travis is just one of the many speakers and sessions designed to help businesswomen from across Western Canada create IMPACT! in their businesses and their lives. The conference includes workshops, collaborative learning sessions and innovative networking opportunities, all intended to give participants the *focus* > *clarity* > *action* needed to advance their businesses. Ann Coombs, author of *Competitive Intelligence*, will describe the imagination, innovation and inspiration needed to ensure business adaptation and growth. Marilyn Herasymowych, co-author of *Solving Problems in Real Time*, will help participants learn how to "Thrive at the Edge of Chaos" and gain an understanding of why people act the way they do when faced with change and uncertainty.

This two-day line up of innovative topics will appeal to a wide range of women entrepreneurs, whether they have commercial space or are home-based, are a sole practitioner or have dozens of employees. Participants can have their marketing materials critiqued by experts in image, design, copywriting and print to ensure maximum return. Or, participants can add depth to their toolbox through facilitated discussion groups on topics such as employee relations, technology, 'homepreneur' and financial management.



Debbie Travis, host of television show Painted House, will be a speaker at the pan-western women's conference in Calgary.

The event is hosted by the Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association (AWEIA), a not-for-profit organization committed to helping Alberta women advance in business. AWEIA is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network established by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). Over the past five years, AWEIA has created IMPACT! by linking thousands of women to other businesswoman across Alberta. This conference is part of their continuing commitment to supporting women in starting and growing their own businesses.

The conference, sponsored by WD and corporate partners, will provide creative opportunities to expand the women entrepreneur's network and explore dynamic links to business peers and potential suppliers and collaborators. Full conference details and registration materials are available from AWEIA at (403) 777-4250 or e-mail info@aweia.ab.ca. Visit www.aweia.ab.ca for regular conference updates. \*

# Graduates Help West Their Technol

If you're looking to commercialize a new technology or develop a scientific technique that increases your production capabilities, maybe you need someone who can identify the appropriate scientific or technical knowledge you require. Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) First Jobs in Science and Technology Program may be able to help.



BC Hydro's Ron Threlkeld (L), NxtPhase CEO Richard MacKeller (M) and WD's Kandice Johnson (R) officially open the NxtPhase optical sensor manufacturing facility.

The demand for accurate measurement is proving vital as deregulation of utilities becomes commonplace. Vancouver's **NxtPhase Corp.** develops digital and fibre optic solutions that will change the way high-voltage electric power is managed in this competitive industry. Its optical sensing products offer more accurate digital information, and improved safety and environmental benefits compared with conventional technologies.

When the company needed a highly skilled individual to help design and build a prototype beta column assembly that combined optical current and voltage sensors into one structure, they contacted WD. Through the First Jobs program, NxtPhase was able to hire Susan Liu, a junior high-voltage mechanical engineer who has focused on development critical to bringing the company's optical sensor product line to commercialization.

"Optical technology is uniquely suited to meter power to a very high level of accuracy," reported NxtPhase CEO Richard MacKellar. NxtPhase has improved upon the 5,000 pound conventional electromagnetic devices that measure either voltage or current with a single

200 pound version that is cost effective and boasts improved accuracy.

"The First Jobs program has been a great boost for NxtPhase," commented Farnoosh Rahamatian, director of research and development. "Susan has been a critical team member in a project which, so far, has resulted in sales and installations at major utilities such as BC Hydro and Hydro Ouébec."



BioWare's Dave Faulkner (L) and Aaron Flynn (R).

If you play video games on your personal computer, or own a Dreamcast or PlayStation 2 system, you may have enjoyed an exciting action adventure game developed by **BioWare Corp.** MDK2 and

# Businesses Improve Capabilities

Baldur's Gate are just two of the games created by this award-winning Edmonton electronics entertainment company.

BioWare heard about WD's First Jobs program through an Industrial Research Assistance Program advisor who thought the program would benefit them because they valued education in their employees. Aaryn Flynn and David Falkner were hired to help develop the company's line of successful products.

Aaryn played a vital role in assisting with the development of tools that made assembly of Baldur's Gate II possible. The entire Baldur's Gate franchise has sold nearly 4 million copies worldwide and won a number of international awards.

With David's help, BioWare was able to develop the technology that powers MDK2, the 3D BioWare Omen Engine<sup>TM</sup>. Omen is the core technology that drives the game, interpreting user input and game rules to result in an entertaining user experience.

"With the First Jobs program, we've been able to enhance our core staff with the best quality people available," said Dr. Greg Zeschuk, Joint CEO of BioWare Corp. "Both Aaryn and David have played pivotal roles in the development of BioWare and our games."



MBD President Doug McNair (right) believes IT graduates can thrive in Western Canada.

#### McNair Business Development Inc.

(MBD) is a prospering Regina-based company that understands the new economy and is applying Web development and secure on-line technologies to support new business strategies. The company serves a wide range of clients in the agriculture, information technology, education, travel and health industries across Canada and the U.S.

### First Jobs Program

If you're a western Canadian company, organization or industry association with fewer than 250 employees, your business may be qualified. Recent graduates can be hired for projects that: adapt, acquire or integrate science and technology new to your business; implement, modify or operate a new technology; or train staff to use a new technology.

The First Jobs program provides salary support that enables your company to hire some of the brightest young graduates that can provide valuable scientific and technological expertise in all the latest equipment, systems and programs, as well as provide fresh ideas on how to use those skills to help your business grow.

It's a win-win situation! As well as providing your business with valuable expertise, the program also helps to provide many young western Canadians with their "first jobs" in their chosen field.

By understanding their clients' business opportunities and objectives, MBD has helped many companies by designing, building and implementing Web-enabled technology to support their business. Their experience helps their clients to reduce costs while increasing revenue and improving services.

MBD President Doug McNair hired four recent graduates with fresh new ideas and approaches with help from WD's First Jobs program. The grads are well trained in a variety of disciplines and get up to speed quickly. McNair noted that expensive training is a norm in the industry, and the First Jobs program allows MBD some flexibility when weighing candidates' long-term potential against limited job experience, as they are crucial to the company's future success and stability.

"MBD is striving to build a knowledge-based industry which allows graduates to develop their careers in Western Canada, to create employment and to stem the brain drain to other parts of Canada and other countries," said McNair.

International broadcasting and digital media industries often have unique multi-media requirements for commercial and Internet applications. Winnipeg's **OMT Technologies Inc.** develops many of these solutions and in 2001 released its new iMediaTouch software suite under the Windows platform. This innovative new application allows radio stations to automate and organize their live and pre-taped broadcasts.

To keep pace with the times, OMT needed to convert their software program from a DOS platform to Windows. The solution was simple, but it came with a price tag. OMT needed an additional programmer with the necessary knowledge to complete the transition. The company approached WD for assistance, and the First Jobs



An engineer at WPGC AM/FM radio Washington, DC, using MediaTo software.

program enabled them to defray the full impact of the cost of hiring a recent graduate for the project.

For three years, the graduate put his skills to work on the iMediaTouch software suite and assisted in elevating OMT's leading-edge software in the broadcast industry. OMT boasts over 400 radio stations in North America among their clients, notably CBC, CBS Radio, Corus Communciations, DMX/AEI and ABC Radio Networks.

"The transition to Windows was a two-year project," indicated OMT Vice President of Administration, Ted Paley. "It would have been difficult to afford an individual of the graduate's calibre without assistance from the First Jobs program." \(\psi\)

NxtPhase Corp.

BioWare Corp.

McNair Business Development Inc.

OMT Technologies Inc.

(604) 215-9822 www.nxtphase.com (780) 430-0164 www.bioware.com (306) 789-0189 www.mcnairbd.com (204) 786-3994 www.omt.net

# Protect Your Intellectual Property Rights – Carefully

By Joan Crichton
Canadian Intellectual Property Office

Many people have a stake in intellectual property (IP) – business people, inventors, artists, researchers, academics, designers, electronic microchip manufacturers, plant breeders and those who keep up with developments in their fields.

#### What is Intellectual Property?

The Government of Canada considers certain kinds of creative endeavours "intellectual property" — patents, trademarks, copyrights, industrial designs and integrated circuit topographies. You can receive

legal recognition for these endeavours in much the same way as you can receive title to a piece of land. Information, such as records and documents that protect intellectual property owners' rights contain valuable information, is available via the Canadian Intellectual Property Office's (CIPO) patent and trade-mark databases on its Web site at www.cipo.gc.ca.

#### IP is collateral

Intellectual property can be critical to a company's success. For example, the president of Coca-Cola said his company could survive the loss of all its material assets – as long as its trade-mark remained, Coca-Cola could rebuild. The copyright on the song, "Start Me Up," earned the Rolling Stones a fast \$12 million – Microsoft obtained permission to use this song to promote their Windows 95 software package.

#### IP is protection

Like insurance, a business should protect its intellectual properties. Some may consider it expensive to spend precious start-up capital protecting IP, but launching a



Before designing, innovating or creating, search CIPO's databases — a great source of business and technical information.

new venture without it is like buying a building without checking the real estate title. It is a wise business decision to obtain legal proof of ownership.

#### Beware of pitfalls

Some companies will hire a private firm to do the groundwork, perhaps to patent an invention or register a trademark. But, do you know if this company has your best interests at heart? There are a number of invention marketing firms who have been identified as fraudulent (although not all are).

Beware of scam artists who promise to look after your intellectual property with a little extra money to proceed with a marketing strategy, while all you have to do is sit back and collect royalties. If you plan to do business with another company, a best practice prescribes that you do some fact-finding first.

Once your business is up and running and you need some hired help, make certain that anyone you engage is firmly bound by a written agreement. Your employee must understand that, under copyright law, any work created for the business by its employees is the sole ownership of the company.

#### IP is a great business tool

For your protection, visit the CIPO Web site at www.cipo.gc.ca. You can access vast patent and trademark databases, file an application electronically, obtain a list of registered patent and trade-mark agents, and order CD-ROM products. Five intellectual property guides are also available, as are interactive tools that explain IP clearly and concisely. \*

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# **Business Start-Up Assistant Web Site Wins Bronze**

by Diane Abernethy

The Canada Business Service Centre's **Business Start-Up Assistant (BSA)** went home a winner from this year's Technology in Government Conference (GTEC) in Ottawa in October 2001.

The Business Start-Up Assistant received the bronze medal Distinction Award in the Federal category for Improving Service Delivery to Citizens and Businesses. The award recognizes outstanding

achievements in developing and implementing service delivery improvement projects with a specific focus upon individual citizens and businesses.

The BSA is an innovative Web site developed by the Canada Business Service Centres (CBSC) that consolidates essential information required by anyone wanting to launch a business. Clients have access to generic and provincial/territorial-specific information organized under topics directly applicable to each step of



the business start-up process, such as market assessment or taxes. The easy-to-navigate site also provides links to federal and provincial forms required for business start-ups.

"The Business Start-Up Assistant is an important national tool for all Canada Business Service Centres and their clients," says Saskatchewan CBSC manager Diana Matsuda. "It provides a level playing

field for anyone wishing to start a business in Canada, regardless of where they live."

CBSCs are a gateway to a wide range of information on government services, programs and regulations for business. They can answer questions about starting a new business or improving an existing one.

For information about the Business Start-Up Assistant, visit the CBSC Web site at: bsa.cbsc.org. •

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

April - June 2002

# Discovering a World of Opportunites

Canadian businesses are showcasing their innovation, expertise and technology to world markets more than ever before. Smaller exporters are celebrating their success in both established and emerging markets, and are an engine driving Canada's economic growth and prosperity.

The Government of Canada ensures that companies looking to expand their markets beyond their city, province and country, have the information about programs and services they need to take advantage of global opportunities.

As western Canadian exporters seek new opportunities, they face a variety of challenges. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) helps western Canadian businesses hire recent graduates for international trade development projects, provides training sessions that help prepare a small business for entry into international markets, and helps western Canadian businesses take advantage of opportunities created by Government of Canada trade missions abroad.

The International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) was designed to help small and medium-sized western Canadian businesses hire recent graduates for international marketing projects. From planning and implementing export market strategies, to translation of product materials and packaging, the ITPP can help a small business offset the costs of hiring a qualified individual who can help them achieve their goal of expanding internationally.

Knowing where to begin may be your biggest stumbling block if you are thinking about taking your product or service to markets outside of Canada. The Getting Ready for Export seminar can help you take the first steps in launching your small business into worldwide markets.

The Interactive Export Planner on WD's Web site is an excellent tool for putting together a plan that will help direct and ensure export success.

WD offers a pragmatic and business-like approach to supporting business in the West. For more information about WD's international marketing programs and services, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378)

or visit our Web site at:

www.wd.gc.ca. \*



-888-338-WEST

## Access West

April - June 2002

International Markets/Exporting

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Access West Editor: Barb Steele – (780) 495-4982

#### Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# WD Welcomes New Secretary of State



Stephen Owen
Secretary of State
(Western Economic
Diversification)
(Indian Affairs and
Northern Development)

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is pleased to introduce its new Secretary of State, the Honourable Stephen Owen.

Mr. Owen has first elected as the Member of Parliament for Vancouver Quadra (British Columbia) in November 2000 and named Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice in September 2001. He has also served as a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Prior to entering federal politics, Mr. Owen was Professor of Law and Public Policy at the University of

Victoria. Mr. Owen has also served as a Commissioner and Vice President of the Law Commission of Canada (1997-2000), and while with the Government of British Columbia, held the positions of Deputy Attorney (1995-1997), Commissioner of Resources and Environment (1992-1995), and Ombudsman (1986-1992).

Mr. Owen received his law degree from the University of British Columbia in 1972 and his Masters in Law from University College, University of London in 1974. In 1986, he also received his Masters in Business Administration from the International Management Institute, University of Geneva.

"I am pleased to be the Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification—the lead federal government department promoting economic development and diversification in Western Canada," said Secretary of State Owen. "I look forward to working with western Canadians to foster innovation and build economic strength in the West. Innovation is based on people, and we will continue to help build a world-leading economy based on innovation, ideas and talent."

# Selling the West in the U.S.

#### Team Canada West Trade Mission

by Neil Kirkpatrick
Senior Economist, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

In late November 2001, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien led a highly successful Team Canada trade mission to Dallas and Los Angeles, along with four western premiers, several provincial ministers and the three territorial leaders. Also participating on behalf of the Government of Canada were Ron J. Duhamel, former Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification, Environment Minister David Anderson, Ralph Goodale, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, and WD's Deputy Minister Oryssia Lennie.

Over 140 Canadian organizations registered for the inaugural **Team Canada West Trade Mission** – 108 for Dallas, 94 for Los Angeles and 58 for both cities. Canadian enterprises signed 19 deals valued at \$92.8 million.

This was the first Team Canada West Trade Mission, with the Government of Canada, the western provinces and territories participating as partners, and it clearly was a success. Hospitality and networking events were well attended and included hundreds of American participants. Sessions provided good opportunities to focus discussion on Canadian capabilities and American market requirements in a range of important sectors, such as: biotechnology, information and communications technologies (ICT), agri-food, energy, building products, aerospace, and culture and entertainment.

"The range of western Canadian business expertise and entrepreneurial talent represented on the mission was outstanding. I applaud each and every company that participated for making this strong commitment to strengthening Canada's trade and investment potential," commented Mrs. Lennie. "Potential American buyers and investors were very impressed with what they heard and saw."

WD-sponsored biotechnology sessions in both cities, led by Dr. Henry Friesen who is the head of Genome Canada, and the information and communications technology session in Los Angeles. Mrs. Lennie led the Dallas



session on agri-food, speaking on the current status of the industry in Western Canada. In addition, Forintek, a forest products association that WD has worked closely with over the years, sponsored the building products session in Dallas and participated in the discussion panel.

"The challenge will be to build on the good will and new contacts that the mission generated," said Mrs. Lennie. "I would encourage western Canadian businesses to pursue trade and investment opportunities in the U.S. WD is ready to help with those plans."

For more information about the Team Canada West Trade Mission and other upcoming events, visit: www.tcm-mec.gc.ca/welcome-e.asp. •

The next Team Canada mission is planned for Delhi and Mumbai, India, from April 22 - 26, 2002.

# Global Western Canadian Companies Ma

Making the leap from local to global markets is huge. Product adaptation, translation of marketing materials and product instructions, and the ability to provide after sales service are just a few considerations for a new exporter.

For many businesses, the main obstacle is having the personnel with the skills required to help them succeed in their international marketing goals.

Simply put, you need to get ready to export. For many businesses, the main obstacle is having the personnel with the skills required to help them succeed in their international marketing goals.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) developed the International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) to help western Canadian businesses and organizations with fewer than 250 full-time employees hire recent graduates who possess the expertise necessary to do just that...succeed in the global marketplace.

If you're a Saskatchewan company looking to export, you might want to contact the **Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. (STEP)**. The non-profit, membership-based organization is designed to promote the growth of Saskatchewan's export industry by assisting businesses realize global marketing opportunities through specially tailored programs and services. They also provide its members with services to promote their



products and services around the world and create opportunities for export sales, contracts and projects.

STEP realized that the ITPP was a good fit for their organization as it gave them the

opportunity to hire employees for areas where members require a high level of service. Kyle Mitchell was hired as a market intelligence (MI) analyst and has completed 96 market intelligence reports on behalf of STEP members, providing them with timely, accurate information about international markets. Glen Millard works one-on-one with companies to provide guidance that ensures all financial components of an export transaction are understood and financial options are explained to members. He has traveled with members to the World Bank in Washington on three occasions and organized a trade mission to Argentina and Chile.

"The ITPP is an excellent program," remarked Gerry Adamson, STEP vice president. "It provides opportunities for young people to gain experience in marketing in international business. STEP appreciates the opportunity to be involved in the program."

# ccess... g it Big on the International Stage

"Furthering your success through innovative business solutions" is the mission statement of Winnipeg's Encore Business Solutions Inc., an award-winning Microsoft® Great Plains® partner that provides valueadded business solutions to its customers across Western Canada and the world.

Although eager to expand their international market presence, Encore found it difficult to allocate funds and human resources needed to pursue its global ambitions. Fortunately, the ITPP assisted Encore in

Encore
Business Solutions

Furthering your success through innuvative business solutions

ita Hildebrand (L) and m Wallace (R) were tremendous additions to the Encore team.

hiring two recent University of Manitoba graduates who have developed innovative marketing tools. contemporary and consistent corporate identity, and a wellfocused marketing strategy. Their efforts have helped position the company as a leading

developer of Not For Profit software within the Microsoft® business solutions community.

"The ability of recent graduates to effectively transfer skills from an academic to private sector environment caused us some hesitation," indicated Encore President Marc Labossiere. "The ITPP helped us overcome our uncertainty. Both Kim Wallace and Rita Hildebrand are tremendous additions to our team, helping us to grow our identity, presence and reputation within the Microsoft® community."

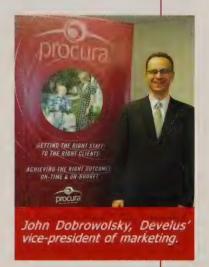
The graduates have tripled the company's marketing resources. As a result, Encore is significantly more proactive and successful in its marketing efforts, and can better capitalize on new and exciting opportunities in the software industry.

In 2001, **Develus Systems Inc.** (dba Procura) recognized that their future success lay in expanding their international marketing efforts. But, they also recognized that the costs of product acquisition/adaptation and marketing would be substantial.

Recent graduates hired under the International Trade Personnel Program provided the market analysis and initial contacts that led Develus Systems to acquire a division of Provider Solutions of Tampa, Florida, and strengthen its competitiveness in the U.S. home care market. Today, Procura's software provides administrative and clinical (OASIS) capacity, as well

as prospective payment system (PPS) billing for clients who provide Medicare-funded services in 14 states.

"WD's assistance through the ITPP enabled Develus Systems to invest in our U.S. marketing and recognize significant growth," indicated company president Warren Brown. "It enabled us to hire computer



specialists to adapt our products for the U.S. marketplace. Their contributions and our marketing strength have been central to our profitability and ability to invest in further product development."

Procura, the company's primary product, is the No. 1 software product in Canada for home care and the public health sector. Four of the five largest national home care agencies have installed and engaged Procura to provide the implementation, training and support services that enable them to increase profitability.

Calgary-based PLAN:NET Ltd. (P:N) provides governments, international and community organizations,

institutions and corporations with a range of development planning and management services.

With its sights set on global organizations such as the World Bank and various UN agencies, P:N needed a new marketing strategy to reach prospective international clients.

P:N knew it could use a young person to work on

international planning and marketing, but was unlikely to hire one due to the investment required. The company also realized that young people have great difficulty in gaining sufficient international experience to be hired by consulting firms like PLAN:NET, even at an entry level. WD's ITPP provided sufficient incentive to overcome these reservations.

"The young people who came to us as a result of the ITPP have added a great deal to our consulting team in terms of energy, fresh approaches, new concepts and improved services," indicated P:N Executive Director Stan Benjamin.

Since adding ITPP graduates to support the experienced team of professionals, the company's project volume has doubled and their client base expanded greatly, particularly in the management services area. Markets have increased, not only domestically, but also in the Middle East and former Soviet countries.

To receive more information about the International Trade Personnel Program and learn if your company would quality for assistance, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378). A Client Service Officer would be happy to help!

#### Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc.

(306) 787-9210

www.sasktrade.sk.ca

**Encore Business Solutions Inc.** 

(204) 989-4330

www.encorebusiness.com

**Develus Systems Inc.** 

(250) 388-0880

www.goprocura.com

PLAN:NET Ltd.

(403) 270-0217

www.plannet.ca



# ACCESS

# MANITOBA

April - June 2002

## Wild West - a U.S. Success

by Sue Murray

The U.S. market is an ever-promising opportunity for the owners of **Schwartz Sausage Company**, a Manitoba seasoning manufacturing company.

The Headingly-based company counts itself among the growing number of small and medium-sized enterprises in Western Canada that are taking advantage of the **International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP)** offered by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

While Rodney and Janet Schwartz currently sell their products across Canada and in 17 states in the U.S., they are well aware of the potential for further expansion. With help from the ITPP, Schwartz Sausage hired recent MBA graduate Jonas Johnson in September 2001 to further develop their expansion into the U.S. market.

According to the Schwartz's, their meat marinades were instrumental in marketing their products in the U.S. Their product lines include: 14 seasonings, sold under the name Wild West Seasonings; meat marinades; specialty seasoning; jerky cure seasoning; sausage seasoning kits; and a novel product for making jerky from hamburger.

"Jonas will also work to increase product awareness, and eventually he'll recruit and train brokers and sales representatives for the U.S. market," says Rodney.

He also projects a 100 per cent increase in export sales resulting from the first year under the ITPP initiative.



Schwartz Sausage Co. President Rod Schwartz (R) hired Sales and Marketing Manager Jonas Johnson (L) through WD's International Trade Personnel Program to boost export sales of Wild West Seasonings.

"Western Economic Diversification, and in particular Lee Gregg, a WD Client Service Officer, was extremely helpful in keeping our expansion plans on track," said Janet. "She also advised us on some networking opportunities and pathfinding services that we found most valuable."

Schwartz's future plans include expanding its product line, expanding its reach in the U.S. market and diversifying the packaging size to better accommodate the food service sector.

To find out more about Schwartz Sausage Company, call 1-800-493-3993 or visit their Web site at: www.wildwestseasonings.com.

#### ACCESS MANITOBA

## Sowing the Seeds...of Sales Worldwide



Denis C. Cloutier, president and owner of Cloutier Agra Seeds, is working to expand the company's reach into the global marketplace.

by Sue Murray

Although genetically modified (GM) crop production is the current trend in agriculture that scores of grain producers are capitalizing on, there are others focusing on the specialty markets that have emerged.

Among those bucking the trend are Denis C. Cloutier, president and owner of Cloutier Agra Seeds Inc., which specializes in the export of pedigreed seed, oilseeds and identity preserved grains.

Cloutier realized there was a specific consumer demand for non-GM food products and moved quickly to respond to the emerging niche market. Nearly four years ago, after deciding to concentrate on a crop not widely produced in Manitoba,

the St. Norbert-based company began marketing new early maturing varieties of soybeans.

Export sales to date have done very well, says Cloutier. The company has widened the scope of its international marketing of agri-seeds and, in particular, soybeans, and now boasts customers in Europe, Japan and Asia.

Future sales look very promising according to Cloutier, and plans to further explore potential markets for soybeans are already in the works.

With funding assistance through Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP), Cloutier Agra Seeds has hired a recent graduate to assist in the development and implementation of the company's export market strategies.

"This WD initiative has been instrumental in helping us realize our potential," Cloutier says. "Our staff has now grown to half a dozen full-time employees now that Wanda Heron has joined the team and is focusing on further developing our markets in the Pacific Rim."

WD Client Services Officer Richard Lloyd says it's rewarding to see clients like Cloutier Agra Seeds benefiting from programs like the ITPP. Lloyd encourages other Manitoba small and medium-sized enterprises to look into programs and services offered by WD by calling 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or logging on to www.wd.gc.ca.

Cloutier Agra Seeds can be contacted at 261-0584 or check out their Web site at: www.cloutieragraseeds.com.

### ACCESS MANITOBA

# What a Concept!

by Sue Murray

It's been 10 years since Freedom Concepts Inc. opened its doors with the mission of "Creating the CYCLE of Mobility" by designing and manufacturing award-winning therapeutic mobility aids for children and adults with special needs.

Freedom custom manufactures products with names like Discovery, Adventurer, Journey, Expedition and Heritage, and has made a name for itself for the quality of work that goes into each order.

The company's Discovery model was the starting point for success. With quick release mechanisms, Discovery adapts easily from one rider to another, making it the bike of choice for many therapists, schools and care facilities.

The *Heritage* series, with its walk through design and low seat, is especially great for people with dwarfism, balance problems, cerebral palsy, obesity, multiple sclerosis, and stroke and arthritis suffers.

This innovative company even designed a two-seater tandem model allowing individuals with physical, visual or mental disabilities to enjoy bike riding.

Orders are filled quickly - from two to four weeks for the little bikes in the Discovery series, to four to six weeks for the Adventurer Tandem, Expedition and Journey series.

"The rehabilitation market has really diversified in the past couple of years, and the therapeutic advantages of our bikes are starting to be appreciated," says Freedom Concepts President Ken Vanstraelen. "This change has allowed us to expand our market into the U.S., focusing on rehab markets where weather isn't such a factor."



DCP 12 RS model in the company's Discovery series.

To carry out the necessary export market research and development, Vanstraelen tapped into Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) International Trade Personnel **Program (ITPP)** for the extra human resources the firm needed.

Marketing assistant Leigh Robinson has been on board with the firm for about a year, and has made promising inroads by cultivating relationships with end-users, therapists and dealers through networking opportunities, industry conferences and trade shows.

With a factory representative in California and independent sales representatives in Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, New Jersey and New England, Freedom Concepts is poised to ride the wave into the southern U.S. market.

Freedom Concepts Inc. can be reached at 1-800-661-9915 or visit their Web site at: www.freedomconcepts.com.

## **Manitoba Business Seminars**

#### Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC)

The C/MBSC and the **e-Business Service Centre** offers a number of seminars to existing and potential entrepreneurs. The seminars are free, but seating is limited. For complete information about the seminars or to register, call 984-2272 or e-mail manitoba@cbsc.ic.gc.ca.

#### Identifying Business Ideas

This seminar will offer tips on where to find sources that generate business ideas.

#### Starting a Small Business in Manitoba

Learn all the bases when starting your own business, including name registration, taxation, licensing requirements and more.

#### Interactive Business Planner

Discover how to use this unique tool to create a personalized business plan online.

#### How to Use the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre for Market and Business Plan Research

Find out what resources are available in the Centre to help you plan your business venture.

#### How to Use the Internet - the Basics

An introduction to using the Internet for business research.

#### How to Use the Internet - Advanced

Designed for those comfortable using the Internet, the seminar will focus on advanced techniques when searching for business information.

#### How to Protect Your Invention: Patents, Copyrights, Trademarks and Industrial Designs

Find out what each form of intellectual property covers, the extent of your protection and when you should apply for it.

#### From Idea to Market...8 Steps to Help You Get There!

Phil Poetker and Ed Lam of Urban Imports Inc. share their experiences and knowledge in seminars outlining the steps you need to take in order to get your product from the development stage to the market — Manufacturing/Production, Ownership Agreements and Qualifying, Negotiating and Establishing a Business Relationship.

#### Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba

The Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba also offers seminars. To check the schedule and register for Winnipeg seminars, please call 988-1860 or 1-800-203-2343.

#### **Effective Marketing for Entrepreneurs Workshop**

This free one-day workshop is presented by consultants from Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines (Small Business and Cooperative Development) and the e-Business Service Centre. Topics include: marketing, promotions and advertising; the difference between what customers may want and what you offer; e-business; the buying steps; and pricing. For more information or to register, contact Jeannine at 984-0037 or 1-800-665-2019 or by e-mail at: lafond.jeannine@cbsc.ic.gc.ca.



# We help new and experienced Canadian companies that have researched and selected their target markets

by Debrah Boucher,

Trade Commissioner (Youth-owned SMEs)
Export Services for Small-and Medium-Sized Enterprises
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The Trade Commissioner Service promotes the economic interests of Canada in the global marketplace. There are over 500 Trade Commissioners working for Canadian businesses in more than 130 cities around the world. Here's how we can help you.

#### **Market Prospect**

Trade Commissioners will help you assess your potential in your target market and provide: advice on doing business; indication of barriers, regulations and certifications; and notification of upcoming events (fairs, conferences, seminars, trade missions). And, they have more than 1,000 free market reports.

#### **Key Contacts Search**

We can provide you with a list of qualified business contacts in your target market that have the local knowledge needed to refine and implement your market entry strategy. The list usually includes: potential buyers, partners, agents, manufacturers' representatives, distributors, importers, consultants, accountants, government officials, associations, chambers of commerce, freight forwarders, lawyers, patent attorneys, technology sources and financial institutions.

#### **Local Company Information**

We can provide information on foreign organizations or companies you have identified. Credit checks are generally referred to specialized agencies.

#### **Visit Information**

Once you decide to visit the target market, we can provide practical advice on timing and organizing your trip (local hotels, business support services, interpreters and translators, and transport providers).

#### **Face-to-Face Briefings**

A Trade Commissioner can meet with you to discuss the latest developments in your target market and your future needs.

#### **Troubleshooting**

If you have an urgent business or market access problem, call us for help. We cannot, however, enter into private disputes or act as customs broker, sales or collection agent, or lawyer.

## The more we know about you, the better the service we can provide.

- What is unique or special about your company, product or service?
- Who are the end-users of your product or service?
- Describe the typical buyer, distributor, agent or partner you want to work with.
- Who do you sell to in Canada?
- Which country or regional market are you targeting and why?
- What do you know about your target market?
- How do you plan to enter the market: export license, joint venture or investment?
- When do you plan to visit the market?

Save time and money by getting the assistance you need right here at home. Call 1-888-811-1119 or visit exportsource.gc.ca.

# Planning is Key for Export Success

Companies look at their annual revenues and realize that a global strategy could significantly grow their company. Often, they get into exporting accidentally when a foreign customer calls and places an order. These businesses may find export success, but can make costly errors along the way without a long-term plan.

Here lies the biggest mistake many businesses make when getting into the export game — the lack of planning. It's essential! More narrowly focussed than a business plan, an export plan concentrates on the activities that a business will undertake to market and sell products and services in specific export markets.

Export plans force a company to think about its business and helps to identify cash needs and raise financing. The plan can be a communications tool for employees, investors and others. And, it provides a benchmark to compare the progress and performance of the business.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) offers a link to the **Interactive Export Planner (IEP)** on its Web site at www.wd.gc.ca/eng/export/, as well as other useful export-related links. The IEP can help an entrepreneur prepare an export plan or an export-focussed business plan. The planner:

- guides you through each section of your plan using a question and answer format;
- provides definitions and tips, as well as sample plans to help you write your own;
- prepares financial projections for you based on information you provide; and
- uses the power of the Internet to help you research your export or business plan.

## Guidelines for Preparing a Good Export Plan

**Define your objectives** – who will read it and what will they to do with the plan. Objectives help you decide how much emphasis to put on various sections.

**Research is vital** — tells you about your industry, potential customers and competitors, and potential sales and costs. Be sure to allocate enough time and resources to do thorough research.

Obtain feedback on your draft plans – include both business associates and others.

Write your own plan – don't borrow a sample plan and simply change the names and numbers. It must reflect what is important to your business and it should flow well, demonstrating why the business will be successful.

**Prepare an outline of key points before you start writing** – will ensure consistency, reduce duplication and address all key issues.

Believable financial projections—the financial section identifies your financing needs and the profit potential of your business. It is an important part of the plan that gives readers confidence in your business. Test your financial projections—failure to accurately reflect full costs of operation can destroy credibility.

**Executive summary** – this is likely to be the first, and often only, section people will read. A good summary is short and highlights what is important in your plan. It should be written last.

**Showcasing Our Capabilities** to the World

The 2002 Edition Western Canadian Aerospace Industry Capabilities Guide

by Tom Heffner, Client Service Officer, WD Calgary

YES, the 2002 edition of the Western Canadian Aerospace Industry Capabilities Guide is hot off the press! With over 300 company profiles of aerospace and related technology companies, the Guide confirms the broad capabilities and potential in Western Canada.

Published by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), the Guide has proven to be an integral marketing tool for WD's Procurement Advocacy/ Suppler Development team. The team uses the Guide to promote and direct sell western Canadian companies in the aerospace and other technology industries to major domestic and international companies looking for qualified suppliers.

WD has been a strong supporter of the aerospace industry in Western Canada for 15 years. In relation to the Government of Canada's Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) policy, WD plays an important role in collaboration with other public and private sector stakeholders, to ensure that western Canadian aerospace companies obtain maximum access to and benefit from major federal government procurement initiatives.

The Guide is used by WD at venues such as Aerospace North America (last year in Seattle, Washington), air shows, Aerospace Industry Association of Canada and other national conferences, Major Crown Project (MCP)/IRB workshops, prime contractor development tours/visits, and various other events. Prime contractors find the Guide to be of great value when researching western Canadian capability for IRB bid proposals on MCPs.

The cumulative effect of these visits, workshops and tools ensures that WD continues to foster working relationships with prime contractors for current and future projects, as well as reinforce WD's role in procurement advocacy/ supplier development.

Prompted most recently by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, there is heightened urgency for far-reaching security measures, both domestically and globally. These circumstances will present opportunities to supply broad arrays of aerospace goods and services solutions. The new Guide will play a part in helping to raise awareness of western Canadian aerospace capabilities, ultimately to supply such solutions.

For more information about the Western Canadian Aerospace Industry Capabilities Guide, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378). ◆

Western Canadian

Aerospace Industi

Capabilities Guide

# **Export with Serenity – Now!**

by Toby Herscovitch, Export Development Canada



More than ever, going global is an appealing option for Canadian businesses—but it can be risky. The biggest risk of all is that you may not get paid for your hard-won sales. That's where **Export** 

**Development Canada (EDC)** can help. EDC is a Crown corporation that provides trade finance and insurance services to protect Canadian exporters and help them expand their business in some 200 global markets.

EDC's Accounts Receivable Insurance protects your short-term credit sales against non-payment by foreign buyers — covering up to 90 per cent of the loss. Just as you insure your other valuable assets, it makes sense to protect one of your most important business assets — your receivables. In addition, your bank will often

lend against EDC-insured contracts, giving you more working capital.

Export Check and Export Protect are two Web-based services that make it easier for exporters to check out potential buyers and get insurance for a particular sale. With EDC's international database of 64 million companies, Export Check allows customers to find out whether a buyer is insurable for the amount of a sale. Export Protect delivers immediate quotes for EDC coverage, if the buyer is insurable.

EDC also offers other specialized services for smaller exporters, including direct loans to foreign buyers that can turn a credit sale into a cash sale. For more information on all these services, please contact 1-800-850-9626 or visit www.edc.ca.

# **Export Alert!** – A Canadian Initiative

Provided by the Standards Council of Canada



Export Alert! is a unique automated e-mail notification service that helps Canadian exporters keep abreast of regulatory changes in global markets before they become the law. This service, the only alert service of its kind in Canada, is provided free-of-charge by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) with the support of the Department of

Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

As of November 2001, Canadian subscribers to *Export Alert!* have access to an enriched version of this service that enables them to: automatically receive electronically amendment notices of new regulatory proposals from member governments of the World Trade Organization (WTO); choose the particular fields which interest them and specific countries; obtain the full text of these proposed regulations; and provide their knowledgeable feedback.

Export Alert! is just one of the many services offered by the SCC. To subscribe or change your personal settings, visit www.scc.ca/exportalert/index e.html.

The mission of the SCC is to promote efficient and effective voluntary standardization in Canada. It also coordinates in cooperation with the DFAIT, the *WTO/NAFTA Enquiry Point*, which includes the *Export Alert!* service.

The SCC recently concluded an agreement with the National Institute for Standards and Technology of the U.S. Department of Commerce to offer American citizens the *Export Alert!* program. The growth of this program into the U.S. is proof of its recognized value to clients across the continent.

For more information, contact the Standards Council of Canada at (613) 238-3222, or check out their Web site: www.scc.ca.

# Web sites that Answer Exporter's Frequently Asked Questions

1. I'm interested in exporting, but I don't know where to start. Where should I go?

ExportSource: exportsource.gc.ca

Team Canada Trade Network's on-line resource for export information that provides a single access point from all trade-related government department and agencies on subjects including: market research; trade statistics; export financing, contacts and regulations/logistics; and trade shows and missions.

2. What federal government programs provide assistance to Canadian exporters?

InfoExport: www.infoexport.gc.ca

Information all on Government of Canada programs and services related to exporting.

3. Where can I find sector and country-specific market reports?

**Strategis:** strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc\_mrkti/ibin/engdoc/dyna mrr.html

Industry Canada offers hundreds of country and sector reports, all for free.

4. Where can I find Canadian export statistics?

**Trade Data Online:** strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc\_mrkti/tdst/engdoc/tr homep.html.

This site provides a searchable database of the latest Statistics Canada and U.S. Department of Commerce trade data.

5. Where do I go for more information about Team Canada trade missions?

#### Team Canada:

www.tcm-mec.gc.ca/welcome-e.asp

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade provides information on all outgoing and incoming Canadian trade missions by sector and global region.

6. Where can I find information about international trade show opportunities?

ExpoGuide: www.expoguide.com

Provides a listing of thousands of trade shows from around the world.

7. What forms or other documents do I need to complete when I am exporting?

**Exporting Goods from Canada:** www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/E/pub/cp/rc4116eq/rc4116-e.html Canada Customs and Revenue Agency's Web site explains the exporting paperwork.

8. Where can I find information about offshore business opportunities?

CanadExport on line: www.infoexport.gc.ca/ canadexport/menu-e.asp

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's newsletter which includes the latest news about business opportunities and trade news.

9. I'm interested in finding information about foreign companies who want to invest in Canadian business opportunities?

Invest in Canada: napoleon.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizinvst/interface2.nsf/engdoc/0.html.
Investment Partnerships Canada can assist companies with their direct investment decisions.

Western Economic Diversification Canada also provides links to a number of other useful Web sites. To access these links or obtain other information about exporting, visit WD's Web site at: <a href="https://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/export.">www.wd.gc.ca/eng/export.</a>

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# Do I Bow or Shake Hands?

When you're meeting a client across town, you know a handshake and a business card exchange form the basis of introductions. But if you're hosting an international client or traveling abroad on a trade mission, research into cultural protocols can make or break the deal you're looking for.

Common courtesy is a standard worldwide and appointments should be made in advance. In Japan, for example, appointments should be made through referrals wherever possible and you should remember that the person referring you is assuming responsibility for your actions.

How you greet and address your new business clients is very important. Shaking hands is the common greeting for both men and women in Guatemala, but they are gentle and prolonged. Women may also pat each other's right forearm or shoulder instead of shaking hands. In Sri Lanka, however, you should bow your head while holding the hands together below the chin as if in prayer, or shaking hands is also acceptable.

Exchanging business cards also has greater significance. In Sri Lanka, for example, use your right hand at all times to accept or pass articles, including business cards. In Japan, the act of meishi (exchanging business cards) is almost mandatory, and proper etiquette would dictate that you present and receive cards with both hands and examine the card carefully. Place cards you receive on the table in front of you for reference during meetings.



Remember to consider the language you present your materials in and how you will communicate during meetings. While business cards printed in another language are a courtesy and usually not required, presentations should be printed in the native language. Many Peruvians understand and read English more fluently than they may be able to speak, so an interpreter would be useful. An interpreter can also ensure that both parties understand details of the interaction to take place.

Research will help you to learn about these and many other cultural customs and business practices that will help you succeed in your international marketing efforts. For more information, contact the Government of Canada Web site with links to all resources and the government's programs and services for exporters at www.canada.gc.ca. \*





July - September 2002

# 15 Years of Working with the West!

On August 4, 1987, the doors opened to the new offices of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Vancouver and Winnipeg. People were lined up to consult with staff about business and economic development opportunities across the West.

Today, WD delivers its many programs through 100 points of service, reaching out to the diverse groups through WD's Western Canada Business Service Network. In addition to the WD offices, Canada Business Service offices Centres, the Women's Enterprise Initiative, Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) and Francophone Economic Development Organizations meet the needs of entrepreneurs in all areas of the West – urban, rural and remote communities. And,

Aboriginal economic development services are increasing the number, size and markets of Aboriginal businesses.

WD is strengthening and diversifying the western economy through programs and services that inspire *innovation*, encourage *entrepreneurship* and build *sustainable communities*. It continues to be a voice of the West in national decision-making. And western Canadians are directly involved in determining

priorities for development and deciding on the best use of resources.

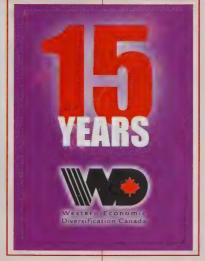
For example, WD-sponsored loan funds have helped emerging and export-oriented small businesses gain access to financing through partnerships with financial institutions.

From the mid-1990s until March 31, 2002, CFDC loans worth \$320 million have created or maintained over 38,000 jobs and levered capital loans from other sources worth \$493 million. Loans through the Women's Enterprise Initiative offices totalling over \$18 million have created or maintained over 1,600 jobs and levered another \$15 million from other sources.

These investments have produced results that are helping the West move strongly into the knowledge-

based economy, building small businesses and consolidating partnerships in both the public and private sector to share the costs of major new initiatives.

In the years ahead, Western Economic Diversification Canada will continue to advance the interests of Western Canada, pursuing a cooperative approach with urban and rural communities to ensure they remain viable, productive and sustainable.





## Access West

July - September 2002

Sustainable Communities

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# A MESSAGE FROM Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen
Secretary of State
(Western Economic
Parsification)

OCT 15 2002

This year, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) celebrates 15 years of working with the West. This is an opportunity to recognize the diverse role that WD has played in building sustainable communities in the West, a region of vast opportunity and tremendous potential.

The key to sustainable communities is partnerships: tripartite Urban Development Agreements, federal-provincial Western Economic Partnership Agreements, national programs delivered in the West such as the Infrastructure Canada Program, and WD's Western Canada Business Service Network. The Department plays a

strategic role in mobilizing all levels of government and community stakeholders to capitalize on local priorities for sustainable economic development.

WD is also a catalyst for establishing multi-party agreements that address important issues: urban renewal, economic adjustment, job creation among disadvantaged groups and skills development. Through cooperative approaches that bring government, industry and community partners together, WD assists communities to find local solutions to local challenges.

WD's commitment to people, sharing knowledge and generating opportunity has contributed significantly to economic prosperity in Western Canada. The Department will continue to work in and for the West by delivering programs and services that inspire innovation, encourage entrepreneurship and build sustainable communities. •

# A 10-Year Vision of Community Economic Development

by Marc Butikofer

Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Okanagan

The beautiful Okanagan Valley and Vernon, B.C., provided the backdrop for the **Western Canada CED Summit** held on June 25-27, 2002. The Summit enabled community leaders from across the West to discuss innovative and sustainable strategies that will guide community economic development (CED) activities for the next 10 years.

Hosted by the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of the North Okanagan and Greater Vernon Services, the summit was preceded by four provincial meetings. The provincial meetings enabled CED practitioners to discuss past, present and future issues. These discussions were then used to develop the agenda for the western summit. The views of over 800 practitioners were heard.

Four major "best practice" themes emerged to become the focus of summit workshops:

- social, environmental and economic;
- human resource development and training;
- CED communication, networking and planning; and
- CED program and organization financial funding.

Participants came from various backgrounds, including rural, urban, Inuit, First Nations and Métis communities. They worked together to establish common ground, build partnerships and forge innovative strategies that could be applied across the West. They were also able to network with other CED practitioners.

WD's Secretary of State Stephen Owen provided an opening address to the Summit. Participants also heard presentations from various players in the CED field, including Senator Ross Fitzpatrick, David Baxter of the Urban Futures Institute in Vancouver and Brian Tobin, former Minister of Industry.

Following the summit on June 28th, members of the western CFDCs met for a one-day session to define their role in community economic development based on the information gathered during the event.

As participants return to their communities, they will be able to build on new alliances and establish the innovative strategies they discussed. The summit has been another step in an ongoing process towards building a viable and sustainable West.

The summit was an initiative of the Pan-West Community Futures Network and Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). For more information on the Western Canada CED Summit, visit the summit Web site at: www.cedsummit.com.

# **Helping Communities**

Long recognized for providing services to small businesses, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is also very active in bringing together government, industry and community partners to manage economic development issues.

Promoting the development and diversification of the western Canadian economy is part of WD's mandate. One of the Department's greatest assets is its ability to address the distinct concerns of each of the four western provinces. This flexibility is vitally important because of the diverse and complex nature of the West. It enables WD to work with different groups to tailor programs that reflect local needs and resources.

British Columbia's coastal communities were adversely affected by the downturn in the Pacific salmon fishery.



part of the expansion and renovation that has allowed

tourism-based businesses to

thrive at the Centre.

As a partner in the Government of Canada's Pacific Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Program, WD stepped in to encourage development and diversification in the region.

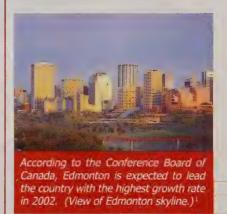
In delivering the Community Economic Adjustment Initiative (CEAI), WD created the CEAI Steering Committee to provide a unique, locally based approach to decision-

making. The initiative provided more than \$19.45 million, and leveraged an additional

\$47.45 million from local, provincial and federal sources, to fund 102 projects in coastal communities.

Over the two-year lifespan of the CEAI, strategic investments were made in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities that had been dependent on fishing. Over 70 per cent of the funding supported projects in small communities that were especially hard hit.

Hiring outreach workers was instrumental in helping remote First Nations communities' complete proposals to access CEAI funding. This assistance enabled them to develop project ideas, which in turn created new opportunities.



In 2000, Economic Development Edmonton (EDE) began to develop a strategy to a c c e l e r a t e economic growth within the Greater Edmonton region. The strategy would also help the city to remain competitive

in an increasingly globalized economy.

WD partnered with EDE initially to conduct an economic diagnostic assessment of the Alberta Capital Region. Strategies were developed. WD also provided assistance to launch the project and identify the action to be taken.

The Greater Edmonton Competitiveness Strategy has pulled together major public and private sector

# chieve Sustainability

stakeholders in the region and cultivated a spirit of cooperation at all levels of industry. Many regional challenges faced by various industries are being tackled and addressed.

This strategy will accelerate economic growth in the Greater Edmonton region and create further employment opportunities.

Economic Development Brandon needed a plan to guide



Building strong communities requires a variety of tools. WD is helping to ensure that the City of Brandon will have a strategy for strong future economic growth. (View of bustling 18th Street in Brandon.)

future development.
Brandon, the second
largest city in
Manitoba, has
experienced rapid
economic growth
over the past five
years.

Just six months ago, WD collaborated with the City of Brandon to develop a

strategic plan to guide the development of the city. This project saw the creation of the 20-year **Brandon Economic Development Strategic Plan** that: identifies strengths and niche marketing opportunities; takes advantage of existing relationships between the city and the adjacent municipalities; creates a targeted economic development strategy; and assesses existing and potential opportunities.

Brandon Mayor Reg Atkinson indicated that Brandon has been repositioned in the rapidly changing global economy. Once considered a remote location, Brandon is now perceived to be fully integrated into the North American marketplace. The strategic plan will guide future economic development and support Brandon's continued growth.

Moose Jaw remains a vibrant, dynamic community



Minister Ralph Goodale thanks a "Tunnels of Little Chicago" tour guide. The tunnels and trolley (in background) received funding from WD to ease the reduction in operations of 15 Wing Moose Jaw and its transition to a NFTC. (July 9, 1999)

following the downsizing of the Department of National Defence's 15 Wing air base and its transition to a NATO Flight Training Centre. With assistance from WD, Moose Jaw is shaping its own future – one that is more prosperous than ever.

WD invested in 12 projects that support tourism, small business development and urban infrastructure under the

Moose Jaw Base Transition Initiative. Projects included: construction of a visitor information services centre; expansion of the Burrowing Owl interpretive centre; purchase of a replica of a historic Moose Jaw trolley; purchase of the Army & Navy Building for a future arts and cultural centre; construction of a new underpass to improve traffic in the area of CPR's high-speed refuelling centre; revitalization of the downtown area, and recovery of contaminated land.

These and other job-creating projects helped to stimulate the local economy and provide Moose Jaw residents with new opportunities and a positive business perspective.

Photo provided by Economic Development Brandon.

# Infrastructure Canada Program Helps to Build Sustainable Communities

by Sherry Brownlee

The Government of Canada launched the six-year Infrastructure Canada Program in 2000 to renew and enhance Canada's physical infrastructure. It is an excellent example of how federal, provincial and municipal governments are working together to improve the quality of life in towns, cities and rural communities. The program emphasizes local input and involvement. Municipalities suggest the majority of projects funded through this agreement.

"Green" projects targeting water and wastewater systems and solid waste management are the first priority. Other priorities include local transportation, culture and recreation, tourism, rural and remote telecommunications, and affordable housing. The program has been quick to achieve results.

By the end of April 2002, the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program had announced 109 projects, representing a total investment of over \$127 million. Projects include water treatment plant upgrades, a regional solid waste management facility and new water and sewer systems for a number of communities under boil water advisories. The program is also contributing significantly to Winnipeg's downtown revitalization.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program provided \$29 million to 91 projects in its first year. In April 2002, the program announced over \$17 million for projects in 137 communities, the majority of which will be upgraded water and wastewater services. Nearly 70 per cent of the projects announced this year are "green" municipal projects.

As of April 2002, the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program had announced 249 projects worth



infrastructure projects being undertaken across the West

\$123.3 million. One recently completed project is the Rotary Millennium House in Edmonton for disadvantaged residents of the inner city. They now live in a residence that offers them comfort, safety and affordability.

The Canada-British Columbia Infrastructure **Program** is investing \$800 million over five years to improve quality of life in the province by focusing on "green" projects for water treatment and waste management. As of the end of June 2002, 94 green projects have been funded, representing and investment of more than \$239 million throughout the province.

The long-term sustainability offered by this program will benefit western communities for years to come.

Western Economic Diversification Canada is responsible for implementing the program in the western provinces on behalf of the federal government.

To find out more about the Infrastructure Canada Program, visit the WD Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/ ced/infrastructure.

July - September 2002

# Vancouver Agreement Lays Foundation for Economic Growth

Vancouver Mayor Says Downtown Eastside "Open for Business"

by Norine Pike

A broad range of business and community revitalization initiatives developed under the Vancouver Agreement were announced in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) on June 28th. They are helping to create a safer, cleaner, more business-friendly environment in one of that city's most historic neighbourhoods.

Stephen Owen, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification; George Abbott, B.C. Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services; and Vancouver Mayor Philip Owen, announced funding totaling \$4.5 million in support of five new projects aimed at stimulating economic development and creating a healthy, safe and sustainable community in the DTES.

The DTES – home to the cobblestone streets of Gastown and Canada's largest Chinatown – has a vibrant history dating back to the mid 1800s. Yet this once proud working class neighbourhood has fallen into decline.

Like many urban neighbourhoods, the DTES has experienced an influx of problems such as drug addiction and dealing, HIV infection,

prostitution, crime, lack of adequate housing, high unemployment and the loss of many legitimate businesses. In fact, it now holds the dubious distinction of being ranked as one of our nation's poorest neighbourhoods.

The Vancouver Agreement recognizes that economic growth cannot occur in isolation. Complex problems – such as those experienced in the DTES – require a multi-faceted approach that acknowledges how a community's health and social well-being affect its economic viability.

These initiatives are part of a five-year collaboration involving the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Signed in March 2000, the Vancouver Agreement focuses on three main areas: community health and safety, economic and social development, and community capacity building.

continued next page



Stephen Owen (LC), George Abbott and Philip Owen (RC), along with leaders of Downtown Eastside Chinese community, at Chinatown Lights unveiling.

#### Vancouver Agreement Lays Foundation for Economic Growth

continued from page 1

#### **New Programs Increase Awareness and Build Pride**

Neighbours First is a three-year program that will train, equip and supervise volunteers to patrol the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and keep the streets clean. The program provides training for residents and businesses about security, safety and hospitality. It will also provide visitors with greater access to information, and promotes the DTES to increase awareness among visitors and residents of the changing environment in the area. Neighbours First is funded by all three levels of government and several local community organizations.

The *Community Historical Markers* project builds on what was achieved through the successful joint Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and City of Vancouver Living Footprints pilot project. The project provides street people with pre-employment training and work experience, while building pride in the area's rich and colourful history.

#### Safer Streets Improve Business Environment

Efforts to stimulate economic development in the DTES have been hindered by adverse street conditions. In order to create a more favourable environment for business revitalization, a series of *Business Development* initiatives – designed to make tourists, shoppers, businesses and their employees feel safer in the DTES – were also announced. These include improved street lighting, physical improvements to streets to enhance heritage sites and encourage tourism, and upgrading the security of parking lots.

Economic revitalization efforts will also support training programs for Single Resident Occupancy hotel managers and tenants to improve living and working conditions. A business advisor will help stimulate economic growth by assessing the training needs of residents interested in owning or managing a business, and helping residents develop proposals for new businesses.

These projects are an important signal to the Downtown Vancouver business community that positive change is occurring. The City of Vancouver, EasyPark and community partners joined WD on these initiatives.

#### **Skill Development Improves Quality of Life**

WD also provided funding to a non-profit society, the Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation, to renovate space for a *Lifeskills Centre* in the Downtown Eastside. This daytime education centre provides pre-employment skills that will help prepare people on the street for full employment. Links to health and community services – including addiction treatment, mental health services, health and education, and assistance with housing, transportation and legal issues – will help improve the prospects of some of the areas most disadvantaged residents.

Finally, WD announced funding to the *Vancouver General Hospital Society* for the purchase of new software at the leading edge of integrated patient care. The software, PARIS, tracks patients so that, no matter who sees them,

information about the services they receive is known. PARIS will allow a more comprehensive approach to monitoring services and ensure that gaps and overlaps are removed in addressing the needs of people in severe living conditions.

#### Partnerships the Key to Healthier, More Sustainable Communities

These new initiatives will build on the progress already achieved under the Vancouver Agreement in the areas of economic development, improvements to the neighbourhood, housing, and health and safety.



Carnegie Centre at Main and Hastings – one of the most recognized intersections in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

"By coordinating our efforts and working with the community over the last two years, we have laid a strong foundation for a healthy and safe community," said WD Secretary of State Stephen Owen. "This unique partnership is giving a much-needed push to economic revitalization of the Downtown Eastside and creating employment opportunities for its residents. It puts people first." Western Economic Diversification Canada is proud to be part of the shared leadership that is helping create a more sustainable community and build a better quality of life for residents of the Downtown Eastside. It's a new approach to inner city revitalization that may well become an important model for all of Canada, and cities around the world.

# **Essential First Steps in the Renew**

by Erin Bigelow

A wide range of economic, social and health challenges have dampened the rich cultural history and economic vitality of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). Commercial and demographic changes and the overt illegal drug trade have created safety concerns, causing an exodus of businesses, residents and tourists. Hundreds of street people are caught in the chaos of this drug and poverty ravaged area, further handicapping the community's ability to restore itself.

The initial stages of the Downtown Eastside's renewal are taking root in the partnerships created by the **Vancouver Agreement**. In March 2000, the three levels of government signed the five-year agreement in recognition of the need to foster a healthy, safe and sustainable community. The broad scope and long-term nature of the agreement allows for analysis of project outcomes and the continuation of successful programs.

The Living Footprints project, an outreach initiative aimed at street-involved people in the area, exemplifies a program that combines artistic work and life skills workshops in a unique approach to community economic development. Participants are recruited off the streets to work with artists to create tiled designs that are placed in sidewalks, and to attend health and employment strategy workshops. The end result was the walking tour made up of beautiful mosaics identifying landmarks and events within the historic Vancouver townsite.

Phase one involved 170 residents of the area over six weeks in the spring 2001. The Carnegie Community Centre, the central administrator of social, recreational and educational programs in the DTES, oversaw the creation of 17 mosaics, as well as an accompanying walking tour and guidebook. Dedicated volunteers and staff worked with the participants on the projects, and local artists, historians and businesses played an integral role in researching and creating the artwork.

The overall response to the mosaics that were placed into the community's sidewalks was extremely positive, and many called for further Artistic Director Jane Can

development of the historic Vancouver Townsite Walking Tour.

While the improvements brought about significant positive changes, program leaders observed even more dramatic benefits in the individuals. The flexible drop-in environment gave street people the opportunity to connect with support systems and meet street nurses and social workers. The mosaics provided a focus for skill development and became a source of self-confidence and motivation for many individuals to start the

## f Vancouver's Downtown Eastside



ng Footprints participants.

process of re-integration. This novel project also marked the first time residents of the area were encouraged to explore and take pride in the rich history of their community.

Living Footprints was launched in August 2001 at the unveiling of the mosaics and walking tour attended by the Honourable Hedy Fry, Mayor Philip Owen, project leaders, participants and the DTES community.

While the program was successful in bringing people off the street, the end of the program marked the closing of

the drop-in centre and the end of social networks that had been formed. In an effort to build on this highly successful project, the Carnegie Community Centre requested and received funding to continue the project and explore self-sustaining business opportunities.

From February-April 2002, coordinators focused on the strengths of the first phase and worked to develop other areas of the program. Phase two concentrated on community network

development by involving more neighbourhood groups in the street beautification project. The coordinators fostered business support and increased consultation with schools and ethnic associations about the design and placement of the mosaics.

Project leaders also altered the structure of phase two to create a better support network reflecting the needs of the 100 participants. The leaders created teams which rotated through more extensive training, and individuals with personal experience on the downtown streets were recruited to act as team leaders and peer supporters. Several participants from the first phase assisted in leading the second phase of the Living Footprints project.

The success stories of individuals breaking out of the vicious cycle of street life and rediscovering their sense of purpose represent the true value of this outreach program. The project's artistic director, Jane Cameron, commented, "This program acts as a transition for street-involved people, connecting them with the necessary services and giving them the basic skills required to seek out further employment."

Living Footprints works to foster the most basic levels of economic development by increasing community control and providing street people with an opportunity to contribute to their neighbourhood, while bringing order to their individual lives.

For more information about Living Footprints, contact John Hansen at (604) 666-1136. •

## **Clearwater Reviv**

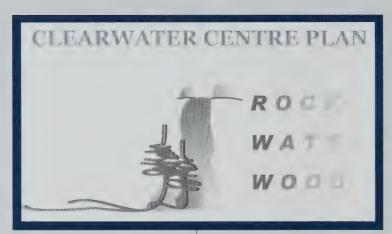
by David G. Morgan

The Community Futures
Development Corporation
(CFDC) of Thompson
Country and the Town of
Clearwater have embarked
upon an ambitious
development plan to spruce
up the community. Inspired
by the need to attract tourists
and encourage business
growth, the plan is designed
to enhance economic,
environmental and social

sustainability throughout this small, unincorporated community of 5,000.

The plan will develop a long-term theme for the community to build on over the next 20 years that includes: zoning recommendations, improvements to building facades, an urban forestry plan, preservation of flora and fauna, and enhancement of cultural and heritage features.

Located in the rugged North Thompson Valley about 126 kms north of Kamloops, Clearwater is the recognized gateway to the geological wonderland of B.C.'s fourth largest provincial park, Wells Gray. The park is remarkable for its primordial-like features and is renowned for the Helmcken Falls, the region's major tourist icon. Its 1.3 million acres of virtual wilderness contains a mix of alpine meadows, extinct volcanic cones, lava flows, twisted canyons, lakes, waterfalls and whitewater rivers that draw tourists from North America and beyond.



Despite the tourism. Clearwater remains "the most forestry-dependent community in British Columbia," according to Thompson Country CFDC General Manager Phil Lindsay. Recent events in the forestry industry have had a hard impact upon the community, he added. The town is primarily a service centre that supports logging

operations in the surrounding forests and other communities nestled along the Yellowhead Highway.

The town has experienced modest population growth in recent years, but the Clearwater Chamber of Commerce recognized it would be prudent to diversify the town's economy. They needed to build on the community's strengths. They also recognized they probably couldn't do it alone.

The CFDC of Thompson Country, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and Venture Kamloops partnered with the Clearwater Chamber of Commerce to develop and finance the Clearwater Community Centre Plan. Other partners included: Urban Systems Ltd., the urban planning specialists who produced the final report; the North Thompson Skills Centre; and the Thompson Nicola Regional District.

## an for the Future

WD had both a direct and indirect role in providing funding. While WD provides general core funding to the CFDC of Thompson Country, in this case, it also provided direct funding

of \$20,000 to Clearwater through the Community Economic Development Opportunity fund to kick-start the plan.

Although the product of many partners, "this plan wouldn't have happened without WD and CFDC funding," stated Lindsay. "It looks to the future potential of the community."

In April 2001, local MP Betty Hinton publicly launched the plan under the banner: *Rock, Water, Wood*. One of the core concepts includes a scheme to unite four community clusters, (Raft River, the 'Flats', 'Uptown' and the highway commercial area), all with divergent features, into a single Clearwater identity.

The plan also seeks critical buy-in from local residents and businesses by facilitating community involvement. In fact, community pride is one of the outstanding characteristics of Clearwater, according to Lindsay. He described how the high school art class, on their own initiative, acquired the wood for signposts and trail markers, and have developed some of the signage that will be going up around town.

The signs, with a common logo representing a stylized Helmcken Falls and the three theme elements of rock,

water and wood, will brand the Clearwater image and direct tourists to amenities.

The common goal
of CFDCs is to build
strong, vibrant
communities
through localized
economic
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The CFDC of Thompson Country played a key role in the Clearwater project and is typical of the 33 CFDCs operating throughout British Columbia. These volunteer-led, non-profit organizations take a grassroots approach to local economic development. Their primary focus is job creation in rural areas.

According to the 2001 census, two-thirds of B.C.'s almost four million people now live in the Lower Mainland and on southern Vancouver Island. If this trend towards southern urbanization continues, the work the CFDCs do in the rest of the province will become more significant to the viability of rural communities.

CFDCs may enter into unique projects to meet the specific demands of individual

communities, but their common goal is to build strong, vibrant communities through localized economic development and diversification. Like the Clearwater project, they all focus on integrating the social and economic needs of their communities and developing a vision for the future.

For more information about the Community Futures office serving your rural area, visit: www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/. •

development and

diversification.

# Partnership Brings New Life to Vancouver Neighbourhood

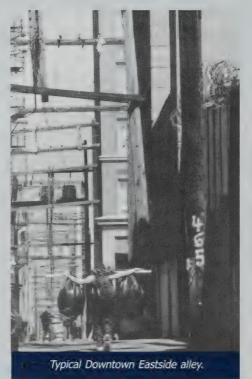
by Norine Pike

The Vancouver Agreement brings together all three levels of government with the community in a coordinated effort to create a safer, healthier, more sustainable community in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). It has already made considerable progress toward its goals. Highlights of the accomplishments, which resulted from strong partnerships between Western Economic Diversification Canada and other organizations during the first two years of the Agreement, include:

The Future Search Conference, held in March 2001, brought together all the Vancouver Agreement partners, as well as a diverse range of community stakeholders. The three-day event laid the groundwork for change in the community and identified common ground for future initiatives.

The **Graffiti Removal** project helped cover the cost of removing graffiti in the neighbourhood, making area businesses more attractive to residents and visitors alike.

The Chinatown Lighting Improvement project saw the construction and installation of 90 historical lampposts in Chinatown. The new lighting was turned on in March and makes the streets brighter, safer and more welcoming.



The **BEACON** (Building Education and Culture in Our Neighbourhood) project was a storefront learning resource centre in the DTES. Building on the success of several similar initiatives in Vancouver, the centre promoted barrier-free access to post-secondary learning opportunities for area residents.

Located at 20 Water Street, the First Nations Creations Artists Co-op operates a workshop and gallery space in Gastown for First Nations artists. It also offers mentoring and training opportunities for First Nations youth.

Interurban Gallery, currently under construction in a heritage building at 9 East Hastings, is slated to contain exhibition space, artist studios, commercial offices and shops.

A traditional Chinese gate – the Millennium Gate – is being constructed at the entrance to Chinatown to attract shoppers and tourists to the area. Part of a broader initiative to strengthen the ties between the DTES and downtown, the Gate will help promote community pride and build on its unique strengths.

For more information about these, and other projects being undertaken through the Vancouver Agreement, contact John Hansen at (604) 666-1136.

# Supporting Development in Rural Canada

Provided by the Rural Secretariat

The Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP) is the Government of Canada's strategy for supporting economic development in rural, remote and northern communities. The CRP ensures that federal programs, policies and activities are administered in non-urban regions of the country.

Listening to Canadians living in these areas and providing support at the grassroots level are two of the cornerstones of the CRP. Through the **Rural Development Initiative**, the CRP supports community-based projects that test new ways of promoting sustainable community development. The projects address areas identified by rural Canadians as priorities, such as the need for better access to financial resources, employment programs for youth and improved program delivery.

The Rural Development Initiative is complemented by the Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI). CARCI's objective is to enhance the viability of rural and remote communities, particularly those communities affected by changes in the agricultural sector. Canadian citizens and organizations can apply for CARCI funding under one of the four program components: research projects; workshops, conferences and seminars; partnership projects; and rural coordination organizations.

The Rural Development Initiative and CARCI are integral parts of the Canadian Rural Partnership. These programs

help support local solutions to local challenges. They range from the creation of a comprehensive Web site that serves northern Albertans, to the development of a sustainable agricultural plan in the Upper Skeena region of B.C.

Through these initiatives and other tools, the CRP is working to enhance the quality of life in rural communities and to equip them to compete in the global economy. This is being achieved through the coordination and leadership of partners who create greater awareness and improved access to products, services and information.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Rural Secretariat provides the overall leadership and coordination for a cross-government approach to rural issues. The secretariat brings together representatives from federal government departments and agencies to discuss rural issues. It also promotes dialogue between rural Canadians and the federal government. Rural teams, which are evolving to include other levels of government and stakeholders, are responsible for implementing the CRP in each province and territory.

For more information on the CRP, visit their Web site at: www.rural.gc.ca. You may also contact Nathanael Olson (Alberta/B.C./Yukon/NWT/Nunavut) at (403) 292-4922 or Darell Pack (Saskatchewan/Manitoba) at (204) 984-6510.



# Community Futures: Meeting

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) across the West are members of Western Economic Diversification's network of business service partners. These offices deliver services that reach into every area of the West.

The volunteer-led, non-profit corporations take a grassroots approach to community economic development, with a focus on job creation in areas outside major urban centres. Each corporation is independent. They deliver their programs in a variety of ways to meet the needs of the communities they serve. From strategic economic planning to business advisory services and from loan assistance to self-employment programs, Community Futures is helping *all* entrepreneurs, including youth and those with disabilities.

Community Futures Development Corporations help to build strong, vibrant and sustainable communities through economic development and diversification. The following four examples exemplify the diversity of projects under way to integrate social and economic needs in communities that have a vision of prosperity for the future.

Beaver County extends 120 km from the Cooking Lake Morraine just east of Edmonton to the Saskatchewan border. From a wooded and hilly area, the landscape gradually changes into rich, flat farmland.

Like other rural communities across the Prairies, Beaver County is troubled with issues of economic and social



Ryley Community Hall.

vitality as changes affect the agriculture industry and youth migrate to urban centres.

The difference between this region and many others is the proactive approach the five

municipal councils have taken to manage their future. The Beaver County Community Resilience Project was based on a regional model of rural community flexibility. The results have assisted in developing a strategy for the communities to build on their strengths, while addressing their weaknesses.

East Central Alberta CFDC accessed funding through the Canada Rural Partnership program to form a steering committee to lead the region through a community development plan. The CFDC is administering and facilitating many of the activities over the life of the project.

Recently, the *Vision Towards Tomorrow Steering Committee* adopted a vision of a prosperous, resourceful region reflecting equality and community pride. By 2010, its mission is to cultivate growth through regional cooperation and economic diversification.

Karen Wright, CEO of East Central Alberta CFDC, says, "The first phase was to complete an economic and social

# **Needs of Rural Entrepreneurs**

resources inventory using geographic information systems (GIS) technology. The inventory enhanced the ability of the communities in Beaver County to plan and make informed decisions for a sustainable future. The next phase will focus on community outreach."



Dan Devita (L) and Pam Krompocker (RC) of the CFDC of the Powell River Region accept the Minister's Award from WD B.C. Region Assistant Deputy Minister Ardath Paxton-Mann (LC) and Dave Wilbur, past Chair of the CFDA of B.C. The award was presented at the March 2002 General Meeting for CFDA.

Recognizing that their geographical location presented challenges, the CFDC of the Powell River Region undertook an innovative project to help strengthen the feasibility and viability of rural merchants. Many of the businesses

on Vancouver Island are too small to be successful, so the CFDC provided an alternative – **Zoombuy**. The world is now their marketplace.

Zoombuy addresses two important barriers for entry into e-business: cost and accessibility. This full-fledged e-service for small and medium-sized enterprises includes full Web presence development, custom graphic design, shopping cart services, real time credit card authorization, domain name registration and ongoing site administration. Most of

these services are free, with the exception of a low monthly hosting fee.

Not only does the CFDC provide rural businesses with access to affordable e-commerce services and comprehensive client services, but it also helps to educate entrepreneurs about the realities of using the Internet as a marketing tool.

The program has been a huge success. Businesses from other areas of B.C. and Alberta have accessed the services of local merchants. These merchants run the gamut from bed and breakfast vacations to art galleries, alternative medicines to hardwood flooring, and handmade instruments to beauty products.

CFDC General Manager Pam Krompocker says, "Since Zoombuy was launched in January 2000, virtual storefronts on the site have increased by 45 per cent and total sales have increased for these businesses by 216 per cent."

If your region depends heavily on agriculture and the industry is changing, then it is obvious that you need to change, too. With help from **NEICOM Developments** (the CFDC in Manitoba's Interlake area), the Stonewall and District Chamber of Commerce invited local representatives to discuss the decline of profits from cereal grain and oilseed production. This decline has adversely affected the social fabric of the region. The outcome of this meeting was the establishment of the



Stonewall and D is trict Innovative Crops Committee — a project-specific partnership of community organizations, local governments and

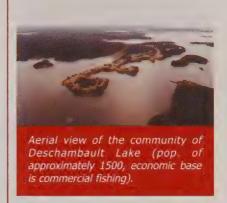
area residents. The committee is evaluating the market potential of existing and innovative crops, particularly those used in the nutraceutical and functional food industries. It is also studying the potential of value-added processing industries for the area.

A market analysis-research study will form the foundation for the next phases of the project. In Phase Two, crop test plots will compare ways to optimize production for the Interlake microclimate. In Phase Three, NEICOM will develop a detailed feasibility study of production and processing opportunities, as well as pro-forma business plans. The plans will help entrepreneurs enter these industry sectors with minimal expense.

"The committee hopes to provide area farmers with crop diversity alternatives that will create local business opportunities, in turn creating local employment and economic prosperity for the region," says Doug Erdman, COO of NEICOM Developments.

Visions North CFDC serves a vast region of northern Saskatchewan that covers 25 per cent of the province. The district faces a huge challenge: it has only *one* retail banking location serving the entire area. This lack of financial services often contributes to remote communities being unprepared and unable to participate in today's electronic economy.

The CFDC undertook a **Northern Community Banking** study to identify secure sites for cash deposits, a secure carrier who could transport the deposits to financial



institutions, and a community access centre within each c o m m u n i t y. Researchers noted that, typically, cash in the communities is depleted quickly, creating credit risks and a dependency on credit from local retailers. Often,

locally owned businesses survive with less than perfect management skills, are unable to deal with cash flow issues and end up as trapped as their customers in a credit cycle.

As the study winds down, Visions North General Manager Vicki Heppner says there will be either a proposal that meets the needs of area residents and the banks, or an indication why one won't work. "The success of the project will be self-evident. If not, it will identify a different starting point, a critical point," says Heppner. "For remote communities to grow and employ their citizens, a way must be found to participate in the current economy."

Visions North hopes to build the capacity to increase economic activity, decrease unemployment and enhance the earning potential of individuals.

For links to the Community Futures offices in your region, visit the WD Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/xindex.hmtl.

# The World is Changing! Do You Have the Courage to Creatively Change with It?

by Bob "Idea Man" Hooey

Business, at its essence, is based on innovation – solving problems or fulfilling the needs, wants and desires of our clients. Here's a potpourri sample of how to take advantage of opportunities to expand or unlock your business potential.

- What business are you REALLY in? Keep asking this question and keep adapting your business to keep it fresh. Hint: Think in terms of customer benefits. What do your customers get when they deal with you? What do they really want?
- Take an idea from another industry and adapt it to suit both your clients' needs and yours (e.g. air miles/coffee cards/Buy 10 Get One Free promotions).
- Try something again that didn't work the FIRST time. It might work now with changes in technology, resources, client needs and attitudes.
- Use a different material or process to do a traditional job. Creativity counts!
- Combine two or more products or services to create a new one. Perhaps you can work with a strategic partner or ally to develop a new service or product that will bring mutual benefit.
- Take advantage of trends or changing interests in the marketplace. This is where your customer service focus will help a lot!
- Look for ways to be a value-added company or person, focusing on real customer service. How can you personally make changes to what you bring to your work?

Being creative is often as simple as being willing to attempt new or unfamiliar activities. Creativity is what solves your problems and builds your long-term business.

Looking at your business with fresh eyes and from different perspectives is one secret in tapping into your inner genius and accessing your Creative S.O.U.L. (Seeker of wisdom, Openness to people and ideas, Unlimited energy and a high Level of risk and adventure).

#### Creative Thoughts

problem solving skills. You can create novel ideas by NOT following expectations, rules, assumptions, long-standing traditions, or company history or policy. Go against the grain and the status quo to find the ultimate solution you need.

Just for a moment, remove the speed limits from your mind and challenge your traditional linear thinking. Look at your problem or idea. Ask yourself a few questions to trigger your creative juices. This will allow you to change the way you look at them. A change of perspective can change results productively.

Bob "Idea Man" Hooey is a public speaker whose techniques have been successfully applied by thousands of professionals in seven countries spanning three continents. Bob frequently contributes to North American consumer and trade publication, and is the author of eight books and business enhancement success tools that reinforce his programs. For more information, visit his Web site at www.ideaman.com or call (780) 736-0009.

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# Government of Canada Seeks Input on Innovation Strategy

The Government of Canada is calling on business, labour, academia, the volunteer sector and all Canadians to define an action plan that will help to achieve Canada's Innovation

Strategy. The strategy, launched in February by Industry Minister Allan Rock and Human Resources Development Minister Jane Stewart, includes a plan for comprehensive discussions with all stakeholders.

There is a growing consensus among business leaders, entrepreneurs, unions, academics and all levels of government that Canada's future depends on our ability to innovate in all sectors of our economy and in all regions of the country.

Regional Innovation Summits will allow business, entrepreneurs, municipal government, colleges and universities, and the non-profit sector in communities across the country, to contribute their voice to the national strategy. The local and regional perspective, from coast to coast, will be key to Canada's success. Summits will be held in cities and rural communities throughout Western Canada, culminating in a national summit this fall. "Do It Yourself' kits will enable groups

to initiate their own discussions at the community level or to submit ideas directly to the government.

The federal Innovation Strategy was launched with the release of two complementary papers. They outline factors

that will drive economic growth and social development over the next decade.

Achieving Excellence: Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity examines the role of innovation in the Canadian economy and defines four key priorities:

- Knowledge Performance: Create knowledge, bring ideas to market more quickly and increase investment in research and development.
- Skills: Ensure that Canada has highly qualified people with the skills for a knowledge-based economy.
- The Innovation Environment: Modernize regulatory policies to support innovation excellence while protecting our quality of life.
- Strengthening Communities: Support innovation at the local level so communities can continue to attract investment and opportunity.

Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians calls for a collaborative approach among all sectors of society to ensure Canadians have the necessary tools in a knowledge-based economy. The paper outlines goals for children and youth, post-secondary education, the adult labour force and immigration.

To obtain a copy of Achieving Excellence, Knowledge Matters or the Do It Yourself Kit, or for more information about the dates and locations of Regional Innovation Summits in your province, visit www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca or call 1-800-O-CANADA (1-800-622-6232).



1-888-338-WEST (9378) Canada

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WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

October - December 2002

# The Entrepreneurial Spirit is Alive and Well in Western Canada

Stories vary from entrepreneur to entrepreneur, but the basic threads that weave their tales together is often the same. Even the most successful businessperson will tell of the hours of personal time invested to get a business up and running, and keep it running. There is the need for constant changes to stay competitive, every last penny that has to be invested and the ongoing search for financing.

They'll also tell you that being an entrepreneur is very rewarding. It is an opportunity to live a dream, be the boss.

It is this entrepreneurial spirit that is helping Western Canada grow and succeed. In a report released by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) in 2001, it noted that there was an average of 743,299 small businesses in Western Canada between 1992-1999 – 36.8 per cent of all small businesses in Canada. The fact that small business is more common in the West is indicative of the significant role it plays in the region's success.

Micro businesses accounted for an average of 23,367 new enterprises a year, or 89 per cent of all new businesses. These companies, typically defined as the self-employed or those with only one to four employees, are created at a much faster rate than larger companies.

These statistics are encouraging for the person with the desire to try on the boots of a small

The fact that

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region's

success.

business entrepreneur. Potential entrepreneurs need to carefully consider if they are suited to the entrepreneurial life before pulling up their bootstraps.

Entrepreneurs must like challenges, be driven and well organized. They must handle the pressures of managing multiple projects at the same time and working long hours for extended periods of time, and putting work ahead of their social life. They

must set achievable goals and be comfortable with risk.

Obviously, western Canadians have the dedication and desire to risk it all and take the step toward becoming entrepreneurs.

With Small Business Week being celebrated across Canada, October 20-26th, WD takes this opportunity to salute the innovative and inventive small business community.



WE



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### Access West

October - December 2002

**Small Business Challenges** 

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# A Message from Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification)

Every October, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and its partners — Canada Business Service Centres, Community Futures Development Corporations, Francophone Economic Development Organizations and offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative participate in special events that honour the hard-working small business entrepreneurs in Western Canada.

These dedicated entrepreneurs face tough uphill challenges head-on and tenaciously work to secure their business' success. From urban to rural, women to youth, Aboriginal to Francophone, and in every sector, small

businesses are defining our economy.

Small Business Week celebrations will take place from October 20-26<sup>th</sup> in communities across Canada. I encourage you to watch for events in your community that provide opportunities for both networking and business development. Events vary, but include: conferences, open houses, seminars and workshops, luncheons and dinners, business fairs or trade shows, and awards program that recognize the achievements of small business entrepreneurs.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and Western Economic Diversification, I applaud the contribution to the western Canadian economy by this rapidly growing sector of our business community – small business. Their ability to diversify and nurture innovative business opportunities will help to ensure the success of our future, across the West and our proud country. •

### **A True Business Spirit**

by Shawna Bourke

Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association

The business success of **Spirit Staffing and Consulting Inc.** is built on a clear vision that recognizes the potential in people. Janice Larocque, a professional of Aboriginal descent, started the company in 1998 after

Janice Larocque, owner of Spirit Staffing and Consulting Inc.

working as the manager of an Aboriginal employment and training centre in Calgary, Alberta.

Larocque identified an ongoing challenge for Aboriginals — they were paid less or not even considered for positions they were qualified for. Spirit Staffing and Consulting was born from her vision for an equal opportunity staffing

resource that would value a range of human perspectives and recognize the full potential of each client.

While the business vision was clear, the nature of the temporary employment industry made initial growth difficult. Financial institutions and employment programs deemed Larocque's concept to be unviable in the long-term. A business built on people and not assets was considered a high-risk venture. Larocque's financial management skills were continually challenged as she balanced the growth of her company with the increased demand on her cashflow. Her company's development depended on receiving a loan for adequate operating capital.

Larocque approached the **Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association (AWEIA)** for one-on-one business coaching, assistance to develop a business plan and a loan. She has since received additional financing to support the growth and expansion of her company. In addition to

adding more staff and moving to a larger location, Larocque started a new company called Fast Labour Solutions to provide temporary employees to the growing industrial sector.

Over the last three years Spirit Staffing and Consulting has increased its sales by 300 per cent and placed over 250 employees on temporary work assignments, often leading to permanent positions.

Larocque has received recognition for her business success and contribution to advancing the local community, including the Métis Nation Entrepreneurial Leadership

Award, the Ivan Ahenakew Award and the Minister's Award for Excellence, presented by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

A business once considered to be unviable now has vast growth potential because of the determination of Larocque who believes the key to success is "believing in yourself and don't let anyone tell you that you won't succeed."

For more information on Spirit Staffing and Consulting Inc., call (403) 244-3012 or visit www.spiritstaffing.com.

Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association

1-800-713-3558 www.aweia.ab.ca

Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba

1-800-203-2343 www.wecm.ca

Women's Enterprise Society of B.C.

1-800-643-7014 www.wes.bc.ca

Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.

1-800-879-6331 www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca

The offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative in Western Canada are committed to helping women advance in business. These offices are members of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network.

# Survival a Sign of Success for Young Manitoba Entrepreneurs



(L to R) Robert Piché, Christian Dandeneau and Daniel Piché's virtual shopping mall, myLocalStore.com, offers on-line storefronts for Winnipeg retailers.

Owning a small business takes dedication, perseverance and personal sacrifice. Financing for new ideas is hard to find and comes at a premium.

For Christian Dandeneau and brothers Daniel and Robert Piché of Saint-Boniface, Manitoba, the challenge was in the form of banks that didn't want to take a chance on three young Francophone entrepreneurs who wanted to open a virtual shopping mall for Winnipeg stores.

With experience under his belt as the owner of a business that built databases and offered Web solutions, Dandeneau needed capital to put together their new vision — myLocalStore.com.

"Our advisors were hesitant to

believe that we could achieve our vision, largely because we were young," he indicated. "Employees and other business associates had to be convinced of the vision and believe in it, too. We asked employees to trust us and allow for flexibility on their salaries, and made special arrangements on how we paid our rent. Otherwise, the

idea would have never worked."

The young entrepreneurs found support from family, friends and other contacts in the business community. They also investigated government programs that could help. The National Research Council's Industrial

Research Assistance Program helped on the technical side, and Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) was able to help arrange a line of credit at the Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM). With this new support, the company was able to secure a loan to take its next step toward success from the WD/CDEM-sponsored micro-loan program at the

Business Development Bank of Canada.

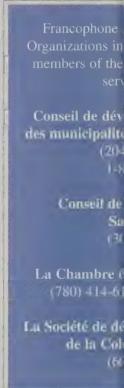
This assistance allowed the partners to launch a publicity campaign that increased the retail outlets on myLocalStore.com to over 50 in September. They hope to have 80 by the end of March 2003.

Although the company's retail clients are predominately English-speaking, myLocalStore.com is planning to offer bilingual services for shoppers. Some retailers already provide product descriptions in both English and French.

"Survival has been our #1 success," commented Dandeneau, president and CEO. "Success of a small business depends on a good network of family, friends, business contacts and government support. This

support is the difference between making it or not."

To visit Winnipeg's virtual shopping mall, visit ourLocalStore.com or call 1-877-794-4877. ◆





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# Saskatchewan Entrepreneur Has Found a Unique Recipe for Success

Blend a cup of personal experience, enthusiasm and humour, along with quart of rich potting soil and budding young plants, and you have Arlette Laird's first book, *The Joy of Planting:* 101 Recipes for Pots and Containers. The unique cookbook-style gardening book sold 10,000 copies in the first year and the second printing is enjoying healthy sales.

The Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, author had years of greenhouse industry experience and an idea to write a series of helpful gardening books. "I didn't know what I was getting into when I decided to write my first book," admitted Laird. "Having worked directly with customers, I had a good idea of the information they wanted. What I realized quickly, however, was the return with a publisher is not great and I wanted to keep control of the books I wrote."

Laird decided on self-publishing and established **Pirouette Publications** in 1999. As a home-based business owner, the hardest part of the business for Laird has been working and making decisions alone, setting timelines and keeping them, and not really getting paid.

Gérald Gareau of Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS) has provided ongoing assistance since Laird first approached CCS in 1998 for help with her business plan. "Gerry will call to check on my cash flow, see if I have updated my business

plan or to keep me on track," an appreciative Laird indicated. "I know I could have received similar help from other organizations, but CCS was more accessible for me. My roots are very important to me, and being able to speak in French helped me proceed sooner with my ideas."

A Montreal-based publishing house released a French version of the book this year. "It was more exciting for me to hold my first copy of the French edition than the English," enthused Laird. "It was like a gift." In the first few months, 2,000 copies of the French version were sold.

Arlette Laird, owner of Pirouette Publications and author of the gardening book series, entitled "The Joy of Planting."

"Writing the book was a wonderful experience. It gave me confidence to know I had accomplished my goal," concluded Laird who said success meant taking her idea and being able to act on it. "Having a best selling book was a bonus."

The second book in *The Joy of Planting* series, *Growing from Scratch*, is scheduled for release in February 2003.

Contact Pirouette Publications at (306) 764-2413 or by e-mail at: pirouette\_order@ hotmail.com. •



# Secrets of Work ... and making the mo



Photo courtesy of Edmonton Capital Region Innovation Centre

According to the Centre for Exhibition Research in Chicago, over 80 per cent of the visitors to industry trade shows are decision-makers who are attracted to an event specifically to see new products, services and developments. They also report that over 60 per cent attend with a plan to purchase.

Obviously, there is a great deal of incentive for exhibitors to come prepared to make sales.

In sales, you spend time chatting about business needs with the goal to develop trust and rapport — develop a solid business relationship. Selling at a trade show is different, because time is a factor. Rapport building goes out the window because there isn't the time.

It takes time to develop skills as an exhibitor. There are four basic levels that trade show booth staff will go through as they develop their skills. As the skill level improves, so does the company's return on their show investment.

Entry level booth staff tend to be reactive, stand at the back of the booth, look uncomfortable and don't have a sense of purpose. They answer questions, but don't ask any.

As skills gradually improve, booth staff will begin to approach visitors, usually saying, "Hi, can I help you?" They answer questions with detail, but usually tell all visitors the same thing. They're vague of purpose and need to go the next step and qualify their sales leads.

By the time booth staff reach the third level they are focused on their objectives, they ask questions and act proactively. They make effective presentations, and can qualify leads and disengage from visitors easily.

Topnotch booth staff are effective because visitors do business with people they like, and the real job at any trade show is getting visitors to like "me" – the exhibitor. Top exhibitors do everything the level three exhibitor will do, but they also have good rapport building skills and understand that every attendee is different. This exhibitor will leave the attendees wanting to do business, is remembered positively, and will generate an above average amount of business.

#### Strategies for Qualifying Leads

Qualifying potential clients is the major task of booth staff. They should collect rather than provide information

# ACCESS ALBERTA

October - December 2002

## Does Your Business Receive the Recognition it Deserves?

Recognition never hurts a business. It helps to secure new business opportunities, financing and creates awareness. Taking advantage of business awards can help generate this awareness.

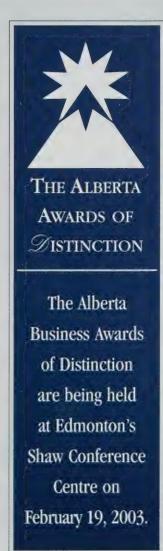
One of several Alberta awards programs is sponsored by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce – the **Alberta Business Awards** of Distinction. The Awards were created in 1991 to celebrate the successes and contributions of the business community in Alberta. Awards are presented annually to deserving Alberta businesses in 13 different categories – from small business to youth employment, First Nations-owned business to new ventures in agri-value.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has proudly sponsored the WD Export Award of Distinction for five years. This

award is presented annually to the organization that best demonstrates outstanding achievement in exporting products or services outside of Canada's borders. In 2002, this award went to ALDATA Software Management Inc. of Hinton, a world-leading supplier of software customized for the forest industry.

If you are interested in learning more about the award categories and criteria, and how to submit a nomination, visit **www.abbusinessawards.ab.ca.** Deadline for nomination entries is November 18, 2002.

If you have achieved corporate excellence and are looking for the benefits that an award can offer, then WD encourages you to enter your company in either WD's Export Award of Distinction or one of the others best suited to your individual business.



### **Recognizing Francoph**

by Jean-François Bernard La Chambre économique de l'Alberta

Over the past few months, La Chambre économique de l'Alberta (La CÉA) has made great progress in many industry sectors. Numerous efforts of the Alberta not-for-profit organization were highlighted for its members during the last Annual General Meeting held on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

The tourism sector provides an excellent example of advances being made by La CÉA. At last count, there were approximately 200 Francophone or bilingual (French and other) businesses and six local tourism committees. Alberta's tourism awareness in the Francophone markets has increased to 18 per cent in 2002, from 2 per cent in 2001.

By networking, Francophone businesses leveraged \$433,030 from business contracts or loan opportunities. La CÉA assisted with the preparation of 11 business plans and nine businesses applied for financing from the **Franco-albertan Micro-Loan Program** offered by different credit unions

participating in the program. La CÉA has now close to 170 members, up from only 22 in 2000.

La CÉA, with support from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), has introduced a business awards program for Francophone entrepreneurs and those providing bilingual services (French and other) as a value-added advantage. The Excellence Award program creates awareness of the efforts made by businesspeople and entrepreneurs in various industry sectors.

### Peas repl



Mountain Meadows Food Processing, a division of St-Denis Seed Farms Inc., processes and exports whole dry peas to many countries around the world. The company decided to stop wholesaling raw materials and add value to the peas.

In 1998, the concept of producing a peanut and peanut butter alternative came to light. Peanuts and peanut products cause some of the most common allergies, with reactions ranging from mild to severe.

After three years of development and selection of a special pea, a unique product was produced. The new hypoallergic pea butter is made using special peas and canola grown in Western Canada. St-Denis Seed Farms has the right to this pea variety.

The company quickly overcame a few stumbling blocks as they

### e Business Excellence

Award nominees are evaluated on the number of new jobs created, financial health, served market networks and linked business levels, community commitment, human resources improvement and quality of customer service provided in French.

Excellence Awards will be presented in October for 11 different categories, including the "Business of the Year" award. All nominees must have less than 250 employees, be managed or ensuring administrative and/or technical management of their human resources,

and contributing Francophone economic development in Alberta.

La CÉA launched this initiative to reward and assure exposure of Francophone or bilingual entrepreneurs who excel and offer a value-added advantage to the economic development of the province.

One such business whose numerous efforts have achieved value-added results is **Mountain Meadows Food Processing Ltd.** of Legal.

## peanuts...

commercialized this unique project. Production equipment was modified and adapted to suit the project. Mountain Meadows Food Processing designed and built the complete project, as it became obvious that local engineers had very little experience in this type of job.

An 1,800 square metre grade processing plant was recently completed and went into production in July 2002. Today, the factory is producing 500-gram jars of pea butter, as well as 11 and 20 litre pails. As Joesph St. Denis says, "Everything that can be done with peanut butter can be done with pea butter."

In the U.S. alone, 1.9 million metric tons of peanuts are produced, with 55 per cent manufactured into peanut butter. "A 25 per cent share of this market would be most of the peas produced in Alberta at this time," indicated St. Denis.

This venture will help create many jobs, from production on farms, to processing and distribution. St. Denis noted that the project was 100 per cent privately funded and without government assistance.

For more information about Mountain Meadows Food Processing, contact Joseph St. Denis at (780) 961-2470. ❖

La Chambre économique de l'Alberta is one of four Francophone Economic Development Organizations that are members of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network. For information about the programs and services offered to Francophone entrepreneurs by La CÉA, or for information on how to nominate an Alberta Francophone business for an Excellence Award, contact 1-888-414-6123 or visit their Web site at: www.lacea.ab.ca. •

### ACCESS ALBERTA

### Taking the Nex

by Gordon Rauscher Client Service Officer, WD Edmonton

It's been a long day managing your business. You're sitting in your office pouring over the books, and it hits you... "I need more money." You check the figures again to make sure they're correct. You can't believe it. You've had your business up and running for eight months and great things seem to be just around the corner. Your first stage bank financing went towards leasehold improvements, manufacturing product for inventory, initial marketing efforts and building your distribution system. But without extra money, you're not going to make it.

You need second stage financing.

This is common to many start-up businesses. It is not a fault of poor management or spending sprees. It is simply a cash flow issue that may break the business! Deals are just coming together, but they are going to use more assets and cause some short-term liabilities. From month to month, your company is reaching the break-even point *almost* regularly, and further markets are being examined and new management expertise is being sought. But all of these things cost money you don't have.

Raising more financing won't be easy. In fact, you probably have very little to offer in the way of additional security for any further loans, and most of your viable collateral has been taken in your first financing round. Other than additional inventory, hard assets are unavailable. What you need to do is look at the big picture.

You have something that no other business has: your track record. If you kept a record (usually an updated business plan) of the strategies that worked and those that didn't, why things were successful or not, contracts in progress, employees hired and their expertise, and the contacts you have made and relationships nurtured in your industry, you are further ahead than most of your peers. Investors looking at your firm may view your current status as the preferable point to invest because you have taken care of 80 per cent of the details that plagued or restricted your business growth to date. Show the forward progress of your business and that your business has value. You may find that there is less risk tied to your business today than the day you opened your doors.

If you realize you have very little in hard evidence of your firm's progress, asking for further financing will probably result in a *no*. Your pitch for extra money may be seen as a handout to someone that does not have a successful plan, let alone the expertise necessary to run a successful business. Banks, investors or stockholders will be more receptive to a request for further funding if you can show where you've been, where you are and where you are going in relation to the timing of the deals that are 'just around the corner.'

The meeting, whether it is with your banker, investor or venture capitalist, is crucial to the success of your funding request. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. Discuss your

### ACCESS ALBERTA

### tep to Success

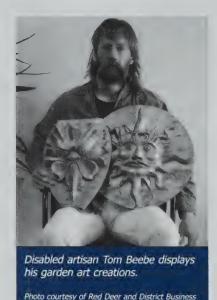
management strengths and the expertise of your team. Discuss the potential for financial returns. Tell your audience why you have a better product, service or idea than your competitors. Discuss your total financial requirements for this stage in your business growth. Be realistic. Your investor will look at the projections want closely and justification for your figures. Discuss your financial commitment as a group. Each of the people at the meeting will have some sort of financial stake in the company. Remind everyone that the stake they hold in the business is evidence that they want to see the business succeed.



Remember, the investor that gave you initial funding may have the contractual right to be offered the first chance to subsequent rounds of financing. Whether it is a bank, investor or venture capitalist, approach your original investor first. They are already familiar with your business and your expertise. If they decline your request, be sure they decline because of a reason other than a lack of confidence in your performance and passion in your business.

# Disability is a Stepping Stone for Aspiring Red Deer Artisan

by Patti Anderson Red Deer and District Business Development Corporation



Development Corporation

Tom Beebe had worked as a carpenter, scaffolder and in various gas plants for over 12 years. Then life threw him a curve. He was diagnosed with osteoarthritis, a degenerative form of arthritis. Cartilage starts to break down, especially in the spinal area, causing limited movement in the back and neck.

Combined with other injuries that he had

received throughout his life, this diagnosis made it difficult for him to continue doing manual labor. Tom had to step back and evaluate his life and his future goals.

In 1991, Tom enrolled in a two-year arts program and became fascinated by pottery and glazing. He decided his new hobby – art — was an entrepreneurial goal worth pursuing.

Tom was directed to the **Red Deer and District Business Development Corporation** who assisted him through the complete business process, from completion of his business plan to financing through the **Entrepreneurs** 

with Disabilities Program, and finally to business start-up.

**BB** Adventures has found a niche in the Red Deer market specializing in garden art creations. Tom specializes in creating moulds of suns, moons and various gargoyles. His handiwork can be used as wall hangings, displayed in flower gardens or used as stepping stones. He is constantly experimenting with various colors and mixtures to find what people enjoy the most.

Tom faces daily challenges due to his disability. His workspace has been designed with tables angled upwards to decrease strain on his neck, and he works rest periods into his schedule to relax his back and neck. Tom has created a flexible schedule that allows him to perform to his best.

Tom's greatest sense of accomplishment comes from finally being able to get his artwork into some of the local stores and being able to follow through on his passion for art. He also feels that his disability provided him with the push he needed to start and follow his dream, and start his own business.

For more information about the garden art produced by BB Adventures, call (403) 348-5315.

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program is delivered by Community Futures Development Corporations across Western Canada. For a listing of the Community Futures office closest to you, visit www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/xindex.html#. \*

### Very Vocal Entrepreneur Finds Musical Success

by Quinn A.C. Nicholson

Kate Haginicolakis of Sherwood Park knows more about being flexible than most business owners.

In November 1998, when she opened her music school, **Very Vocal Music Studios**, Kate had a steady job as a waitress and the school was as a side project. By December, everything changed.

Kate contracted diabetic retinopathy, a complication of diabetes that causes damage to blood vessels in the eyes, and can later cause new blood vessel growth over the retina. "I went from having 20/20 vision, to somewhere around 20/400. I was spilling coffee into customers' laps," she commented.

When waiting tables became impossible, Kate focused on her musical abilities — particularly her own voice coaching. Having completed Royal Conservatory of Music training, two college diplomas in music performance, and possessing a strong community presence, Kate threw herself into her business.

Finding creative solutions to her problems as a disabled entrepreneur required ingenuity, flexibility and a helping hand.

**Distinctive Employment Counseling Services of Alberta** (**DECSA**) helped Kate to expand her business with a loan through **Ventures**, an entrepreneurial program for persons with disabilities after her bank had rejected her as 'too risky'. Ventures is delivered through a partnership between DECSA and the **Edmonton Community Loan Fund (ECLF)**, sponsored by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

From helping prepare a business plan, advice and mentoring, to aid in promotion and live exposure, DECSA and ECLF have helped Kate keep up with her company's expansion, while avoiding overextension.



Today, Very Vocal hires 10 sub-contractors, has almost 100 students, and offers lessons in voice, guitar, piano, bass, woodwinds and drums. "...and strings are coming this fall." adds Kate cheerily.

Whatever obstacles her business venture puts up in her path, Kate is prepared to overcome them with her self-ironic sense of humor. For words of wisdom, Kate offers the following: "It's always good to look to the horizon... even if you can only see 10 feet in front of yourself."

For information about Very Vocal Music Studios, call (780) 619-0758.

DESCA is a community-based, non-profit organization that assists individuals with employment barriers to achieve employment. For more information about Ventures, the Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Initiative, or other programs and services offered by DESCA, contact (780) 471-9604 or visit their Web site at: www.desca.com.

### ACCESS ALBERTA

### **Aboriginal Artist Finds his Niche**

by Darren Arnault
Client Service Officer, WD Edmonton



Born on the Fairford First Nation reserve in Manitoba in 1968, Derek Fisher moved to Alberta in 1970, living first in Slave Lake and arriving in Edmonton in 1976. It was during this time that he began his life long dream of being an artist with support from family and friends.

By the time Fisher attended high school, he already knew what he wanted to do – paint, draw, sketch and publish his art. He attended Winnipeg's Red River Community College where he immersed himself in courses such as graphic arts, business, creative communications, advertising art and artist management.

Fisher has since poured all of his talent, experience and education into the field of graphic design, illustration, advertising and promotional art for print, Web and outdoor advertising needs. He returned to Edmonton and has developed an advertising and promotional art studio, **Derek Fisher Graphic Design and Illustration**.

As an artisan, Fisher faces the challenges of funding his business and creating awareness for his artwork. He recognized the need to target a specific niche and decided to focus on government departments working on First Nations initiatives, and First Nations and non-Aboriginal businesses.

Fisher participated in National Aboriginal Day (NAD) as an exhibitor to create awareness for his artwork in 2001 and 2002. The Government of Canada Partnership Committee hosts the annual event on June 21<sup>st</sup> in Edmonton's Canada Place. The event provides Aboriginals with the opportunity to showcase their talents. Western Economic Diversification Canada has worked with the Partnership Committee since 1999 to plan, organize and co-sponsor the very popular event. Attendees in 2001 were treated to a special performance by renowned Inuit singer, Susan Aglukark.

NAD gave Fisher the opportunity to showcase his talents to crowds of over 4,000. He met with potential clients face-to-face, heard what they thought of his artwork and acquired new government contacts.

Fisher determines his success by the amount of positive feedback he receives. After the recent National Aboriginal Day, he feels he's doing very well. Step-by-step, byte-by-byte, Derek Fisher is living his dream. •



# at Trade Shows of your opportunities

in the first few minutes of any interaction. In the April-June 2001 issue of *Access West*, this was discussed in greater detail.

#### Breaking the Ice with Attendees

Valuable opportunities are wasted when prospects just walk by. Visitors are usually hesitant to make contact and many prefer to scope out the entire trade show before they commit to taking a long look at an exhibit. Be proactive — take the initiative and approach the visitor.

Exhibitors will need to develop an effective opener, focus on business and ask questions that provide the opportunity to gather more information. Be careful not to ask questions if you don't want the answer or don't know what to do with the answer.

It may be useful to approach with a question, introduce yourself and shake hands. If you're demonstrating a product, get one person involved with one of their senses. This person should have above average interest in the presentation. If no one is showing interest, then smile, stand at the front of your booth space and make eye contact with visitors. Greet them, introduce yourself and ask why they are attending the show.

#### Wrapping Up or Disengaging

If the visitor does not need your product or service, or they have qualified and you have completed a short presentation, then the last step is to wrap up the conversation or disengage effectively so you can move onto the next potential client.

Disengaging should not be rude or impolite, but a logical end to the conversation. When handled properly, the visitor will leave feeling positive about you, your company and its products and services.

#### **Exhibitor Tips**

Basic tips that ensure success while working a booth

- Arrive fresh every day and be well groomed
- Always act professionally, but have fun
   Listen, maintain eye contact and treat each visitor individually
- If you make a promise, keep it
- Stay mobile, but don't stand in the aisles
  Remove chairs from your booth don't sit
- Don't talk to colleagues or read the newspaper
- Don't eat in your booth, take scheduled breaks
- If you need a drink, only have a glass of water in your booth
- Bring several pairs of shoes to help relieve foot strain from standing for long periods

#### Hidden Opportunities

Exhibitor opportunities at trade shows are not limited to activities in your booth. Look for new contacts and use the event to network and discover possible partnering opportunities, suppliers or clients.

To help business improve their success at trade shows, there are courses offered in centres across the West that can help you improve the skills noted above, as well as the effective use of displays and demonstrations, and other useful tips that help companies make the most of their trade show dollars. •

# Taking Control of Your Business



by Kim Deans
Client Service Officer, WD Regina

Why are some people more successful in business than others? Why do some businesses flourish where others fail?

Thousands of companies under-perform annually because key decisions are not made to control overhead and operating costs. Successful entrepreneurs spend as much time managing their business expenses as they do increasing their customer base.

Why is more energy placed on increasing sales than controlling expenses? There is an old saying, "a dollar saved is a dollar earned." For business, the saying should go "a dollar saved is worth six dollars in sales."

Here's how it works. Assume you buy a product and mark it up 20 per cent for resale purposes. You need to sell \$6 in product to earn \$1 in gross profit. The gross profit has not taken into consideration overhead and operating costs.

Let's look at how one local businessman applied principles of reducing overhead and operating expenses and increased his net income.

William purchased inventory in bulk to take advantage of supplier bulk discounts. After calculating the discount and comparing it to additional financing charges and storage costs, the reduction in working capital and the increase in accounts payable, his operating and overhead costs exceeded the supplier's discount.

William integrated a POS (Point of Sale) system that provides him with more time to increase his customer base and train new staff. An automated reorder point advises him when inventory reaches a desired control level. And, it provides important management information on the various product lines — which products are selling versus those with slow turnaround.

The next step was to review William's accounts receivables. He was amazed how "aged" the receivables were and had never stopped to calculate how much his accounts receivables were costing him. We projected the reduction on his line of credit balance and calculated the reduced interest expense assuming the aged receivables were collected. The exercise provided the desire and incentive to implement an action plan. Invoices now indicate "Net 30 Days" and a reasonable interest for overdue accounts. He implemented a diplomatic collection plan for repeat clients, and a professional well thought out collection plan was activated to collect the aged accounts. The end resulted in a manageable accounts receivable list, a decreased credit line balance, additional

working capital, lower interest charges and a decrease in the number of bad debts.

He also spent an equal amount of time analyzing other expenses such as advertising, leases and travel, and was successful in increasing his bottom line by controlling overhead and operating costs.

Take the time to review your bottom line and business practices. A loan won't necessarily solve all your problems and may only cause complications. The key to making your business more profitable may be as simple as reducing your inventory or one of the solutions William found.

# RegWatch: A Standard Quick Fix for Canadian Regulation

Provided by the Standards Council of Canada

As of the summer 2002, there's a better way to track down Canadian federal regulation standards. For years, the only way to find the information was to visit the Justice Canada Web site, call up the regulation that fit the criteria and start digging through the potentially hundreds of pages of data. Though a few search engines were available through U.S. providers, they were designed to primarily service U.S. federal regulations, had limited capability to search Canadian regulations and were not always up-to-date.

**RegWatch** is the latest in a growing line of information products developed by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) designed as a one-stop-information-shop for those interested in tracking technical standards in Canadian federal legislation. After months of development and testing, this service covers a variety of fields including:

- the location within federal legislation where standards are referenced;
- information about standards, including the most current version that is available, as well as a link to bibliographic data about them;



- the Standard Development Organization (SDO) responsible for development of standards; and
- links to the full text of the legislation.

RegWatch is intended to serve a variety of stakeholders, from Canadian regulators, to exporters, importers, manufacturers, small businesses, engineering and building firms, as well as libraries and legal firms, to name just a few. As a free service offered by the SCC, RegWatch is ideal for the small business proprietor as a means of checking up on the latest standards required by federal law in all areas of service and manufacturing.

For more details, contact Tanya Burba at (613) 238-3222, ext. 461, or visit the SCC Web site at: www.scc.ca.

### Real People, Real Jobs: Hiring Persons with Disabilities

Many view a disability from the perspective of the limitations it poses. In reality, persons with disabilities are fully capable of participating in all aspects of daily living. But, they may need to work in different ways and require support.

Today, persons with disabilities are represented in every sector and industry in our economy. They are simply real people, looking for real jobs.

Hiring the right person for the job starts with conducting an effective job interview. You are interviewing a person with skills and abilities to determine if they are the best fit for your job opening. Candidates with disabilities should be evaluated accordingly, including their ability to perform the essential job functions with reasonable accommodation.

Here are some tips for an effective job interview with any candidate, including those with a disability.

#### Preparing for an Interview

- Make sure your office and interview location is accessible to applicants with mobility, visual, hearing or cognitive disabilities.
- Be willing to make appropriate and reasonable accommodations to enable job applicants with a disability to present themselves in the best possible light. For example, if an applicant is blind and requires help to complete forms, provide assistance.
- Third parties, such as a social worker, should not take part in the interview unless requested by the applicant.

Ensure all interview questions are job-related. Speak
to the essential job functions of the position - why,
how, where, when and by whom each task or
operation is performed. DO NOT ask whether or
not the individual needs an accommodation to
perform these functions. Such information will likely

reveal a disability that may exclude them before a job offer is made.

• If testing is part of the interview process, ensure the test does not reveal information about physical or mental impairments. Inform the applicant before the interview that a test will be part of the interview process. An applicant can request an accommodation, such as a different format for a written test.

Persons with
disabilities are
represented in
every sector and
industry in our
economy.

#### Conducting an Interview

- Relax and make the applicant feel relaxed, and don't be afraid to make mistakes. Use courtesy and common sense, as would be afforded all other applicants.
- Don't speculate on how you would handle the job if you had the applicant's disability. The person with a disability has mastered alternative techniques and skills of living and working with their particular disability.
- If the disability is obvious or is made known by the applicant, the employer can ask how they would perform an essential job function, and if they require reasonable accommodation and the type of accommodation. All questions should be job-related.
- Concentrate on the applicant's technical and professional knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and interest, not their disability.

# Invisible Disability Doesn't Stop B.C. Entrepreneur

With a fountain of experience in the secretarial, administrative and desktop publishing fields, Kathy Smith of Victoria, B.C., found herself facing life-changing employment obstacles because of a disability known as agoraphobia.

Agoraphobia is an extension of panic/anxiety disorder. Sufferers experience intense, varied and reoccurring panic attacks, accompanied by a host of physical symptoms that are very frightening. For some, these attacks make leaving home impossible.

Smith had been self-employed for years, holding several lucrative contracts that required in-office work and travelling to meetings. In 1998, however, she found herself unable to continue working outside her home. "It was very frustrating," she indicated. "I loved my work, but stress was burning me out."

Instead of conceding defeat to her disability, Smith decided to make her home-based business permanent. The path to becoming an entrepreneur, however, was not easy.

While researching her options, Smith found that re-training or upgrading was impossible without leaving home. She consulted employment and government agencies for assistance. "It was a vicious cycle. No one could help. They didn't have programs that could deal with my type of disability." After four years, she had almost given up.

A friend told Smith about the Advice and Business Loans for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities (ABLED) program at Coast Capital Savings Credit Union. ABLED is a joint initiative between Coast Capital Savings and Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). The program helps entrepreneurs with disabilities

in the Greater Victoria area start or expand their businesses.

With an ABLED loan, Smith purchased and upgraded computer equipment and promoted her business. She hired a graphic designer to compliment her skills, as well as home support workers to help her cope with business and health issues. Smith reports the business has been able to meet or exceed its

"Coast Capital provided me with a stepping stone that helped boost my confidence. Their assistance helped turn the business around," said Kathy Smith, shown here with Detlef Beck of Coast Capital.

monthly forecasts since opening a year ago.

"To make enough money to hire my own staff was very important to me," indicated Smith. "And to be able to hire others who are disenfranchised is one of my goals."

Smith has established a network of clients through past business associations and the Internet. Many clients never meet her face-to-face. Most client contact is by e-mail, but she also meets with clients at her home if required.

For more information about **Smith Secretarial and Design**, call (250) 361-3121 or visit her Web site at: www.islandnet.com/~ksmith/smithsec.htm.

For information about the various programs and services available for entrepreneurs with disabilities, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Flace 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

### Financing Challenges for Small Business

by Ron Sellen
Manager, Capital Services Secretariat

A recent study commissioned by Industry Canada entitled, "SME Financing in Canada," indicates that 23 per cent of registered small businesses sought debt financing in 2000. Of those, 82 per cent received financing.

Unfortunately, with over two million small businesses in Canada, that meant almost 84,000 financing requests were denied. Common reasons included: insufficient sales and cash flow, poor or no credit history, lack of collateral, and lack of business maturity – characteristics that often apply to very small and start-up businesses.

For example, suppose I am an entrepreneur. I'm about to use my savings and some of Uncle Bert's to start or expand my business. My business is too small and too new to be of interest to venture capitalists, factors and other lenders I've heard of. I haven't visited Industry Canada's Business and Consumer Web site, Strategis, or my local Canada Business Service Centre. No matter, I've got enough money to buy the equipment and materials I need to get started. I shouldn't run out of money before I make any sales and if do, I could always go to a bank or credit union to get a loan – right? WRONG!

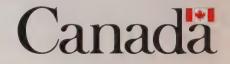
As a pilot friend once said, "There are old pilots and bold pilots, but darned few old, bold pilots." Planning as much

as possible before flights keeps them from having too many brushes with fate. But what would *planning* do for me? Aside from the financing angle, it can save me from doing things that others have learned don't work. Planning can help identify all of the costs to start and keep a business. It can also help determine when and at what cost a product or service will be ready to sell, who will buy it and for what price and payment terms.

If I've been realistic in making my estimates, I'll know when I can expect to break even and if I have enough money to keep going until then. If I discuss my plans with my bank now, I could be one of those 82 per cent of small businesses that get their loans approved and have financing arranged before they need it. On the other hand, I may learn my business won't fly and avoid becoming another downside statistic. Either way I win – with my business, or with my savings (and Uncle Bert's) intact for an investment with a smoother flight plan.

For a copy of the SME Financing in Canada study or for other useful information for existing and potential entrepreneurs, visit the Strategis Web site at: www.strategis.ic.gc.ca. For information about the Canada Business Service Centre closest to you and the programs and services available, visit www.cbsc.org. \*





# ACCES WEST

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

CA1 WE -A18 January - March 2003

# Innovation – a Way of Life for Successful Entrepreneurs

True innovators

are continually

reinventing what

they do and how

they do it to grow

bigger and better

in the new

economy.

Small business is the backbone of the western Canadian economy and a main driver of job creation. But, no matter if the business has one employee or hundreds, being innovative today involves embracing the most current techniques or new technologies that improve productivity.

Research by Statistics Canada indicates that innovative companies show productivity increases 6-9 times higher than companies that are not innovative. The Business Development Bank of Canada added that global markets and growing competitiveness are behind the demand for increasingly higher productivity.

In other words, innovation is a key driver of productivity.

Innovative businesspeople think smarter about their approach to

business. True innovators are continually reinventing what they do and how they do it to grow bigger and better in the new economy. Businesses known for their innovation attach importance to everything from customer service to financial management, capital retention to exporting, as well as recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. They also use new technology.

Innovators take a comprehensive business approach, with emphasis on research and development activities that lead to both product and process innovations.

Embracing and leveraging the power to new technologies

Innovative entrepreneurs are quick to develop, improve and refine technology, and reap the benefits. Canada's innovative small businesses use the Internet to explore new markets and expand their reach. They adapt new technologies to their best advantage and full potential.

For businesses that have achieved growth through innovation, there is no mystery to their success. They have applied inventive methods to important business decisions concerning technology,

materials, prices, marketing methods and customer service techniques.

Join the growing wave of western Canadian innovative business success stories and take a close look at your business decisions. Turn problems into innovative opportunities. Make innovation a way of life — a culture that drives everything you do! •



Canada www.wd.gc.ca -888-338-WEST

### Access West

January - March 2003

#### Innovation

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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#### Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

### A MESSAGE FROM Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification)

Canada is committed to becoming a world leader in innovation. New ideas and opportunities are key to creating improvements in our world and unlocking opportunities in the West. At the heart of innovation is the business community.

By harnessing the talent and imagination of local community members, entrepreneurs, business leaders and academia, Western Canada can move closer toward meeting its potential. For this to happen, we need to promote the creation, adoption and commercialization of knowledge.

Innovation is about taking Canadian ideas and turning them into new products and services — more efficiently than our competitors. It's about improving our ability to capture the economic benefits of these new products and services. Within the business community, innovation means promoting the adoption of advanced technologies and providing better tools and information to succeed in today's new economy.

Canada's Innovation Strategy outlines a plan for creating a culture of innovation and excellence in regions across the country. Insights gathered from the Innovation Summits held recently throughout the country will help the West, and Canada, create long-term prosperity and build a platform for success in the knowledge-based economy. \*

# **Business Leaders Provide Valuable Insight**

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) established Business Advisory Councils in each of the four western provinces to gather timely and relevant advice and information regarding western Canadian issues. Each provincial advisory council meets twice a year to discuss trends, opportunities and economic development issues in the West, and provide input to the development of policies reflecting the interests of the region.

Each council consists of knowledgeable individuals from business, industry associations, Chambers of Commerce, academe and WD's Western Canada Business Service Network. They incorporate

representatives from key sectors in each provincial economy, with consideration given to geography and the population diversity of each.

These business and community leaders meet with WD's Secretary of State to help identify program and service

requirements, provide feedback on planned initiatives, and offer insight on how government, industry and academia can work together to build a stronger knowledge-based economy in the West.



WD Secretary of State Stephen Owen plans to meet with western business and community leaders in January 2003.

# Access West – Bringing You the Complete Picture in April 2003

It is my pleasure to bring you Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) quarterly newsletter, *Access West*. It has provided the opportunity to deliver information about the programs and services offered by WD, speak with many successful entrepreneurs and share their stories with you, as well as other information that you, as readers, indicated was important to you.

WD's strength is its ability to recognize the diverse needs of Western Canada, and adapt and change its programs and services to meet constantly evolving needs. Over the past year, WD looked at its services and how it can better serve the West. While WD will continue to promote the development and diversification of the western Canadian economy and advance the interests of the West in national economic policy, the Department will build on its efforts to inspire *innovation*, encourage *entrepreneurship* and build *sustainable communities*.

While the face of *Access West* will not change, beginning in April 2003, its focus will examine each of these three areas and how WD is working with the West to develop the region's opportunities and potential in the knowledge-based economy. This will provide a complete picture of the work undertaken by the Department. It will expand our reach to a diverse audience – entrepreneurs, businesses, communities, academe, research and development organizations, and many more.

I look forward to your comments and input on the new *Access West* in April. \*

Barb Steele Editor



## Linking Health Research

by Brant Popp
Director, Policy, WD Headquarters

Canada will invest over \$1 trillion in health and healthcare over the next 10 years, and the annual trade deficit in health products is now approaching \$8 billion. Is there a way to turn this massive expenditure into an investment that can provide economic and social benefits to Canadians? Or, stated another way, can we do better at identifying, developing and commercializing new health innovations?

The answer to this question is both challenging and complex. The opportunity to improve linkages between health and innovation is gaining interest in Western Canada, and nationally. Throughout early 2001, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) supported a consultation process, under the leadership of the Western Canadian Task Force on Health and Economic Development. The Task Force explored, with western Canadians involved in health research and life sciences, the challenges and opportunities in strengthening health research, and

commercialization activities in all four western provinces.

Over the past decade, we have seen the emergence of some impressive developments and advances in health research in the West. Most recently, the Edmonton protocol gained international attention for its innovative treatment of diabetes. Other key areas include: cancer, genetics, biotechnology, proteomics, robotic surgery techniques, and functional foods and neutraceuticals. This world-class research offers the potential for significant improvements in healthcare and healthcare delivery for Canada and the world. And, the ideas, products, technologies and delivery systems present

substantial economic benefits in terms of new investment, export opportunities and the creation of skilled jobs and new enterprises.

Dr. Henry Friesen, chair of Genome Canada, leads the Task Force. In its report, entitled *Shaping the Future of Health Research and Economic Development in Western* 

Canada, leading proponents of health innovation in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan indicated their willingness to collaborate on the commercial development of health research and to apply research benefits within the system. They also identified an opportunity to build on health investments as a cornerstone of economic development in Western Canada.

With the continuing support of WD, the Canada West Health Innovation Council (CWHIC) was created in August 2001 as the champion to advance this agenda. Led by a steering

committee chaired by Dr. Aubrey Tingle, President and CEO of the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, the Council is identifying key areas of health research and health expertise within each province. By developing *managed networks*, expertise between provinces is linked to achieve critical mass in commercialization and the competition for national and global funding.

Placing the strategy within a national context is the logical next step. With the opportunity presented by the pending release of two major federal reports, the Romanow Report on Canada's health system and the results of Industry

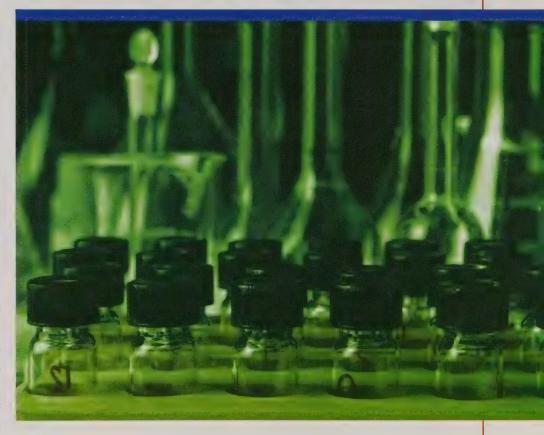
### d Economic Opportunity

Canada's consultation on creating a national Innovation Strategy, CWHIC worked with the Public Policy Forum in 2002 to bring the discussion to the national stage. More than 100 leaders in industry, government, academe, the health sector and investment community met in August 2002 to endorse the Council's proposal to link the health and economic agenda through the vehicle of comprehensive managed health innovation networks.

Western Economic Diversification Canada is encouraged by the response from western and national stakeholders. The Department has made significant investments across the West in technology commercialization of health and the life sciences. Building on partnerships with other federal

government agencies, such as the National Research Council and the Canada Foundation for Innovation, western provincial governments, universities and the private sector, the focus is to produce real benefits in terms of new medical discoveries, the commercialization and use of new technologies within Canada and abroad, and the attraction of investment and highly skilled personnel to our world-class health sectors.

The opportunity for Western Canada and Canada to realize the health and economic benefits from leadership in life sciences and innovation in healthcare is both exciting and challenging. As this initiative proceeds, with the support of western Canadians, the West will be at the



forefront of efforts to help renew and sustain our healthcare system, while creating jobs and increasing productivity through innovation. •

Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada — Romanow Report www.healthcarecommission.ca

Industry Canada Innovation Strategy www.innovationstrategy.ca



for many different types of radios.

(Photo courtesy of TRLabs)

# **Collaboration Leads to Western Success**

"The universe is change; our life is what our thoughts make it."

Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor

by Laura McNabb

No sector in the world changes more quickly than that of Information and Communications Technology, or ICT. The industry encompasses areas such as the Internet and new and emerging wireless technologies. Keeping Western Canada on the forefront

of the demand for connectivity is TRLabs.

TRLabs is a unique ICT research and development model well suited to success despite the ups and downs of the economy. The consortium brings together partners in the joint pursuit of new technology applications, advanced knowledge in information technologies and the development of highly skilled workers vital for the regional and national economy.

Headquartered in Alberta, TRLabs has offices in Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg, and is recognized as a leading model for industry-university-government collaboration.

The prominence of ICT in the current global economy continues to grow rapidly. The sector currently accounts for about 45 per cent of all private sector research and development in Canada, the results of which generate \$26 billion in annual product exports and employ 500,000 Canadians.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is a leading supporter of TRLabs, having invested over \$27 million over the life of the organization. This support represents the key thrusts of WD in support of the Government of Canada's Innovation Strategy: focusing on innovation to develop and diversify the economic base of Western Canada into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And, focusing on entrepreneurship to help foster the growth of new business and economic development.

WD's investment has paid off. To date, TRLabs has trained 700 highly skilled university students in ICT that contribute to a competitive edge for Canada. The organization's industry partners have commercialized 250 TRLabs technologies, generating economic development and industry market opportunities. And, they have generated 144 patents, issued or pending, ensuring that benefits of intellectual property are realized and exploited in Canada.

TRLabs delivers knowledge, expertise and technologies with commercialization potential. It is supportive of small and medium-sized enterprises seeking a foothold in the new knowledge-based economy, and it attracts multinational companies to Western Canada, laying the foundation for generations of success.

For information about the programs and services available at TRLabs, visit their Web site at: www.trlabs.ca.

# ACCESS

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

January - March 2003

## eBusiness Connection - B.C.'s Premier Free e-Business Information Resource

by Naomi Moore

The 21st Century is seeing rapid technological transformation on the Internet, making it essential for business to adapt quickly to remain competitive. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), the Canada/British Columbia Business Services Society and the Leadership & Management Development Council of British Columbia have created **eBusiness Connection** to help.

eBusiness Connection, or eBC, has created a friendly, comfortable environment that allows clients to experience the latest in e-business technologies. Located in the Canada/B.C. Business Services Centre, clients are able to surf the Internet, browse the in-house library or sit down with an e-business specialist for more in-depth one-on-one assistance. Their comprehensive Web site — www.e-bc.ca — also allows clients to conduct their e-business research from their home or office.

"We created eBusiness Connection in response to local community demand for more e-business education," says eBC Project Coordinator Robert Lewis. "Our clientele range from established small business owners with no e-business experience, to entrepreneurial start-ups looking to leverage the power of the Internet. eBC's services will offer something for everyone."

One feature of eBC is the *Solutions Suppliers Database*. B.C. companies are featured in the database and offer clients a variety



of services designed specifically for small business, such as Web design and development, software and hardware applications, Internet services, e-marketing services, and more. Most of the Solutions Suppliers listed are small to medium-sized businesses, so they understand first-hand the special needs of small business.

By providing easy access to the best B.C. has to offer in e-business services, eBusiness Connection hopes to become *the* information gateway to e-business research.

### ACCESS BRITISH COLUMBIA

### The Wine R

### Further Advancing British Columbia's



by Karen Sandhu

A good bottle of wine just doesn't happen. Prestigious wine producers rely on a close collaboration with academe. Now British Columbia can be added to the world's elite wine

producing regions that benefit from a major research university – the **University of British Columbia**.

Western Economic Diversification's Secretary of State Stephen Owen announced \$490,000 in assistance to the University of British Columbia's **Wine Research Centre** (WRC) on September 12, 2002. The assistance was provided under Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) Innovation and Community Investment Program.

WD's support assists with the acquisition of additional laboratory equipment, including

a Gas Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer and a High Pressure Liquid Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer, which can be used to analyze the chemical changes in wine during the aging process. Two fermenters will also be obtained to study the controlled micro-oxygenation of wines. This will aid the centre in conducting research on the science of grape cultivation and wine making.

### ACCESS BRITISH COLUMBIA

### arch Centre

### rnationally Competitive Wine Industry

Established in 1999, the WRC addresses the research needs of B.C.'s high profile and rapidly growing wine industry. The centre conducts pioneering research in enology (study

of wine) and viticulture (study of the vine), and develops highly skilled graduates with relevant, scientific expertise.

"The Centre will be of local, provincial, national and international significance, raising B.C.'s and Canada's stature as serious producers of excellent wine;" says Dr. Hennie van Vuuren, director of the Wine Research Centre.

Dr. van Vuuren, a wine biotechnologist, has been instrumental in developing the WRC at the University of B.C. in collaboration with the wine industries

across Canada. He and his students have received several awards for research excellence.

For more information about the Wine Research Centre, contact (604) 822-0418 or visit their Web site at: www.agsci.ubc.ca/wine. •

#### **HISTORY**

In 1999, the Eagles family bequeathed \$3 million to the University of B.C. for the creation of a new Chair in Food Biotechnology. This enabled UBC to hire Dr. Hennie van Vuuren, an internationally-recognized expert on wine yeast genomics and the aging of wine. Dr. van Vuuren established the Wine Research Centre at the university. Approximately \$400,000 of the bequest was used to establish an initial laboratory. The balance of the donation is kept in an endowment fund with the investment returns used to cover salaries.

#### **MISSION**

The Wine Research Centre's mission is to conduct pioneering research in enology and viticulture, and to develop highly qualified people with relevant scientific expertise and enterprise who will promote the technological advancement of the wine industry in Canada.

### ACCESS BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Best Practices Web Site — Information Sharing at its Best!

by Joanne Doddridge Community Futures Development Corporation of North Cariboo

The new Pan Canadian Best Practices Web site is an innovative information sharing system designed to provide an access point for resources used by community-based economic development organizations across Canada, their clients and the public.

The site was developed by the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of North Cariboo on behalf of the Community Futures Development Association of British Columbia and the Pan Canadian Community Futures Group. Western Economic Diversification Canada was a funding partner for the initiative.

Central to the success of the project is cooperation among these organizations and Community Futures offices across the country. Indeed, the resource-rich Web site represents collaboration, partnership and teamwork at its core.

Designed to provide a public showcase of CFDC and Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) client success stories and community economic development initiatives, the site also helps these organizations share operational resources and documents via a "Members Only" section.

The latest in Web design and programming technology was used to construct the site, resulting in a remarkably simple, yet highly functional tool for both public users and CFDC/CBDC staff. The site features relevant and sensible information, an attractive, professional layout, and intuitive navigation. Web developer Kolten Cowie custom designed and built the structure of the site, including the search engine, specifically for flexibility and ease of operation.



"Having the creativity and expertise of so many CFDCs literally at my fingertips has helped on several occasions. It is a tremendous resource and very easy to use." - Joanna Winter, Manager of FutureCorp Cowichan.

Photo courtesy of FutureCorp Cowichan.

Project coordinators Greg Lawrence and Joanne Doddridge are pleased with the early Web site activity, noting that over 1,000 individual visits were logged in the first three months of operation. They are optimistic that the site will become more popular and continue to evolve to meet expanding user needs.

As a modern resource tool, the Pan Canadian Best Practices Web site allows Community Futures organizations to take advantage of the collective experience of nearly 300 member organizations across the country.

The Best Practices Web site contains the "best" resources of member organizations in Canada. It represents informationsharing at its best.

Visit the Pan Canadian Best Practices Web site today at: www.communityfutures.ca and click on Best Practices. •

# NewMIC Leads the Way in New Media Advances

by Erica Branda
New Media Innovation Centre

Who will make the next major advances in new media? Computer scientists and engineers? Artists and designers? What about social scientists? Who will lead the next revolution – multi-national companies, entrepreneurs, academics or government labs?

New media research requires a blend of all these skills and perspectives working cooperatively. This is the concept behind the **New Media Innovation Centre** (**NewMIC**) in Vancouver.

NewMIC is a not-for-profit organization designed to be the water cooler for Western Canada's new media industry. It brings a multi-disciplinary group of researchers together from large multi-national corporations, local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), academe and government — all sharing ideas and resources to build technologies and applications that will make British Columbia, and Western Canada, an internationally renowned centre for new media innovation.

Researchers build, test and demonstrate innovative new products in NewMIC's 25,000 square foot state-of-the-art research facility, equipped with an immersive media lab and a human centred design lab, both funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada. These facilities are available to all members and affiliates to conduct NewMIC research and to develop and test their own technologies. Members of the community may access these facilities as well on a fee-for-service basis.

NewMIC will help position British Columbia and Canada as world-class players on the international new media stage. It will play a key role in increasing the quantity and quality of new media researchers and faculty members in Western Canada by attracting research leaders, training graduate and undergraduate students, and developing the current pool of industry research professionals.

Industry researchers who participate in NewMIC work in an exploratory environment, away from the day-to-day priorities of their supervisors and colleagues. They absorb

Students explore new forms of compute interaction at NewMIC's immersive media lab. New Media is application-driven research and development that combines the talents or artist with the skills of technology developers.

(Photo courtesy of NewMIC)

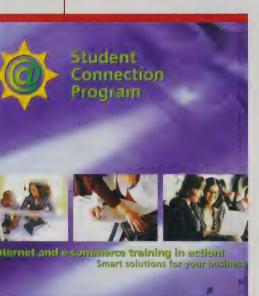
new ideas and perspectives that span many academic disciplines and serve as a catalyst to spread these ideas throughout their companies.

NewMIC will also help to create jobs in Western Canada by developing new technology and spin-off companies, and by supporting and incubating emerging technology businesses.

NewMIC plays two very important roles to help SMEs succeed in the knowledge-based economy. First, it acts as a virtual Chief Research Officer and Laboratory, connecting SMEs to research infrastructure, expertise, new ideas, direction and new technologies. SMEs gain firsthand knowledge of where the large multi-national companies are spending their research dollars. Next, it helps SMEs commercialize technology by providing access to business expertise.

For more information about the programs and services offered by NewMIC, contact (604) 806-5100 or visit their Web site at: www.newmic.com.\*

# Taking Your Business to a New Level Through the Power of the Internet



Operating an innovative business means using technology to your benefit. Businesses that use tools such as the Internet to their advantage are better equipped to get their ideas to market.

As e-commerce solutions become more flexible and consumer confidence grows in the World Wide Web, more businesses are looking to sell their goods and services

online. But, adding an electronic storefront to a "bricks and mortar" business means readjusting business processes to work in a virtual market.

The Student Connection Program (SCP) was created to provide young people with hands-on work experience to enhance their future employability. They receive specialized training and are tested and certified to become Internet and e-commerce Student Business Advisors (SBA). The advisors provide on-site, customized Internet training and e-commerce services to businesses in urban communities across Canada.

From computer and Internet training for SMEs and seniors, to Web site planning and design, to e-commerce training and solutions, the Student Connection Program is 100 per cent tailored to a client's needs. A team of e-business professionals and qualified post-secondary students will provide the perfect mix of high quality service and reasonable pricing.

*E-Commerce First Step*, a gateway to the world of e-commerce, is one of the programs offered by the Student Connection Program.

The *E-Business Blueprint* is a targeted, one-on-one consultation that provides the business owner with a comprehensive overview of e-business integration in Canada. An advisor will assess a client's level of readiness to move their business transactions online. The Blueprint covers four main areas: hardware and software issues, Web site and business issues. At the end of the consultation, the client will have an informative E-Commerce Action Plan for future reference.

The *First Step* program also offers several easy to understand targeted consultation packages.

- Web Site Planning how to build and format an effective Web site.
- Web Site Evaluation how to get better results from your current site.
- On-Line Promotion how to market online and direct traffic to your site.
- Selling on the Internet how to incorporate electronic payment into your online business.

An initiative of Industry Canada and the Youth Employment Strategy, the Student Connection Program operates administrative centres in each of the four western provinces. Each centre recruits youth and offers high quality, up-to-date training services. Since 1996, SCP has hired 3,200 university and college students and post-secondary graduates as Student Business Advisors. They have provided hands-on technology training to more than 80,000 businesses across Canada.

For more information about programs and services offered by the Student Connection Program or the nearest centre, call 1-888-807-7777.

# "Remote Access" Takes on a New Meaning for Western Canada's Aboriginal Economic Development Officers

by Carmen Carvajal

Aboriginal economic development officers living in Western Canada, many in very remote locations, will find it easier to share information with their peers and access information critical to their jobs and communities thanks to a powerful new dedicated Extranet tool.

In the fall of 2002, the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) established an Extranet — or dedicated network — to help over 400 economic development officers (EDOs) harness the power of the Internet in order to boost economic development in their communities. The project received \$400,000 in funding from Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Aboriginal EDOs play a crucial role developing the economic profile of Aboriginal communities in Canada. To date, exchanging ideas with their peers and accessing work-related resources has posed a challenge due to the remoteness of the communities where they are based. There is also a lack of economic development information specifically tailored to the needs of Aboriginal communities.

"The accessibility of online technologies will help economic development officers enhance their ability to plan and deliver sound economic and community development projects," said Stephen Owen, Secretary of State for both Western Economic Diversification and Indian Affairs and Northern Development. "This project is consistent with the Government of Canada's commitment to strengthen the well-being and self-reliance of Aboriginal communities and to increase connectivity among Canadians."

Once it is up and running, the Extranet will help reduce the time EDOs currently spend locating information on topics such as labour market analysis, public programming, venture capital pools and community development initiatives.

Veronica Vinge, education and human resources manager at CANDO, describes the Extranet as a one-stop shop where Aboriginal EDOs can access all information related to their work. "Officers can now collaborate and work online, access information critical to their jobs and meet virtually for mentorship, coaching and learning, without having to leave their communities," indicated Vinge.

CANDO is acting as the hub of the new Extranet, supplying content and the appropriate technological infrastructure. The trial phase of the project was implemented last fall with EDOs who previously participated in the Technology for Economic Capacity project. In 2000, the project provided over 400 EDOs across the West with state-of-the-art computer hardware, software and training.

Initially, the new Extranet will serve EDO's from First Nations bands, Métis organizations and settlements, and other Aboriginal organizations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. CANDO representatives expect to extend the service to the rest of Canada when funding becomes available.

For information about the programs and services offered by CANDO, call 1-800-463-9300 or visit their Web site at: www.edo.ca. •

### WestLink: A Catalyst for Te

by Sherry Brownlee

Technology and innovation are big business. New companies are bursting onto the stage across the West. With such intense activity, it was evident there was a need for an organization to act as a catalyst in the area of technology transfer. *And*, there was a need for qualified technology managers.

WestLink Innovation Network Ltd., a not-for-profit organization, was established in May 1999 to address

exactly those needs — to accelerate technology transfer in Western Canada through collaboration, skill building and targeted, 'gap-filling' programs and services.

Originally founded with four universities, WestLink's membership has expanded to consist of a network of

23 western Canadian universities, colleges and research institutes. They have also created links among venture capital firms, university spin-off companies, industry and the legal profession.

One of the very innovative ways WestLink achieves these linkages is through its **Technology Commercialization Internship Program (TCIP)**.

WestLink recognized that good technology managers were in short supply. In partnership with its members, they developed an integrated model to train individuals in Western Canada. The two-year internship program is designed to provide hands-on experiences within the technology commercialization industry. These groups include technology transfer offices, venture capital or finance organizations, and high-tech companies.

"Our internship is an example of how our membership worked together to fill a gap of building a pool of skilled individuals for this industry," said WestLink's President and CEO Derek Gratz. "Technology commercialization is a collaborative business and this needs to be reinforced. Our internship program has led to increased connections, collaboration and awareness between the three types of placement hosts that are integral parts of this industry in Western Canada."

The two-year Technology

Commercialization Internship Program
is designed to provide hands-on
experiences within the technology
commercialization industry.

Julie Wafaei, University of Victoria graduate with a Masters degree in Molecular Biology, was one of the first interns to go through TCIP. Now, in her final placement, Wafaei is working in business development at one of Canada's fastest growing companies, Angiotech

Pharmaceuticals. The biotech industry has been the focus of her placements. She has had an opportunity to gain specialized expertise in her area of interest and developed an impressive range of skills in a short period of time... an unheard of opportunity.

"Canada's biotech community is relatively young, so we don't have the same clusters of talent and expertise as the U.S.," she noted. "TCIP is helping to build those clusters locally. It is a unique way to fast-track the process of developing much-needed management in this sector."

Wafaei's first placement was with the University of Victoria's Technology Transfer office. She then moved on to Ventures West Inc., one of Canada's premier private venture capital firms for high-growth technology companies.

### nology Transfer in the West

"The TCIP placements have been incredible," said Wafaei. "The value of the experience is that each placement gives you skills that overlap into the next, so by the time you are at the end of program, you can look at the world of technology commercialization from all perspectives. You see how the pieces all fit together and are able to make contributions."

Wafaei commented that these placements welcomed her. "Everybody wants to help you build your career and they introduce you to more people who can do the same. We all realize just how important it is in the technology sector to have people who can manage the process of commercialization."

Such intensive experience would take years for a graduate to acquire in the workforce. The program provides interns with a foundation in the scope of issues that affect successful commercialization of early stage inventions.

The current two-year internship pilot program included 19 interns from across Western Canada. They have developed professional linkages among themselves and with others in the innovation system, which has already led to some new commercialization agreements and investments in technology development.

The success of the pilot program has generated tremendous interest in carrying it forward with a second group of interns. In September 2002, that vision became a reality. Stephen Owen, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification, announced \$1.2 million in funding to support the programs of WestLink. An additional \$400,000 will go towards phase two of WestLink's Technology Commercialization Internship Program to train an additional 20 interns.



Julie Wafaei has gained specialized expertise in biotechnology through her placements with WestLink's Technology Commercialization Internship Program.

WD also provided support for WestLink's newest initiative of technology bundling. This concept *pulls* technology to sectors that are ready for it. This is a much more commercial focus than the old model that saw technology being *pushed* from the development end toward finding a commercial application. WestLink addresses these gaps between push and pull by creating awareness and relationships.

This is great news for Canada's flourishing technology sector. With a growing community of experts bringing emerging technologies to commercialization, Canadians can expect to see innovative new services and goods being brought to market. Here at WD, we say welcome aboard!

For more information about WestLink and the internship program, contact (403) 974-8470 or visit their Web site at: www.westlink.ca.

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# Innovative Breakthroughs in Science and Technology Start with Research

Before we can enjoy the benefits of new advances in science, research is essential. Developing equipment that will analyze DNA for cancer research doesn't happen magically. It takes highly skilled research personnel with access to the necessary equipment, facilities and installations to undertake leading-edge research and development.

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) was established to fund research infrastructure projects specifically in the areas of health, the environment, science and engineering.

Under the Canada Foundation for Innovation Support Program, or CFI-SP for short, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) assists qualified applicants to develop a project proposal of the calibre expected of the various CFI programs. Eligible incremental costs include goods ad



professional services. Colleges, universities, hospitals and non-government not-for-profit organizations doing research in Western Canada may be eligible for funding of projects that involve the modernization, acquisition or development of research infrastructure.

The Canada Foundation for Innovation is an independent corporation established by the Government of Canada in 1997 to strengthen Canada's capacity for innovation and to carry out world-class research and development technology. Information about the various innovative

funding programs offered by the CFI can be found on their Web site at: www.innovation.ca or call (613) 947-6496.

For complete program criteria, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/finance/programs/xcfi.html. \*



Canada

Publications

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

April - June 2003

# Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Communities

Access West highlights Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) role in the West through three pillars that build on its mandate to promote the economic development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada.

WD plays a diverse role through programs and services that inspire *innovation*, encourage *entrepreneurship* and build *sustainable communities* from a western Canadian perspective.

*Innovation* at WD takes into account regional and local innovation capacities and economic development patterns in order to meet its objectives.

- Improve knowledge infrastructure and capacity.
- Increase commercialization of new technologies.
- Enhance the capacity of firms to develop and adapt new technologies and processes.
- Support community and regional innovation strategies.
- Coordinate and align innovation priorities and strategies between federal and provincial government departments and the innovation community in the West.

WD supports *Entrepreneurship* by helping to create a competitive and expanded business sector.

- Maintain a community and industry-based business service network to provide one-on-one service and program delivery to businesses.
- Improve access to capital for small and mediumsized enterprises.
- Increase export/trade opportunities and export readiness skills development to assist businesses to compete globally.
- Promote new investment in the West.
- Improve business management skills required to start, manage and expand business operations.

Sustainable Communities means increased economic activity that improves the competitiveness of and quality of life in urban, rural, northern and Aboriginal communities across the West.

- Support economic development of major urban centers.
- Strengthen the ability to plan and implement activities that promote community sustainability.
- Assist with community adjustment initiatives.
- Leverage new business investments in communities.
- Promote economic opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and their increased participation in the economy.

Through these three pillars, WD is helping to build on the strengths of Western Canada and developing programs and services with a unique *made-in-the-West* perspective.

### Access West

April - June 2003

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#### Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

## A Message from Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) Promoting the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada has been the mandate of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) since its doors opened over 15 years ago. WD coordinates federal economic activities in the West, and ensures western Canadian interests are represented in national decision-making.

WD offers programs and services that evolve to meet the current needs of the business community and the region. In 2002-03, this progress has included a natural evolution of our strategic direction to represent the outcomes we strive to achieve.

The West is filled with vast opportunities and tremendous potential. WD is working to ensure that the opportunities and potential are fully developed. Investing in innovation, maintaining a broad network of support for entrepreneurs, and building competitive cities and healthy communities across the West are all core priorities for the Department.

The Government of Canada, and WD, is working with the West to make the most of its strengths and ensure access to opportunity and solid infrastructure. I invite you to subscribe to Access West and learn more about Western Economic Diversification Canada's contribution to the prosperity of the West.

# WD Participates in Research into Rural Youth Out-Migration

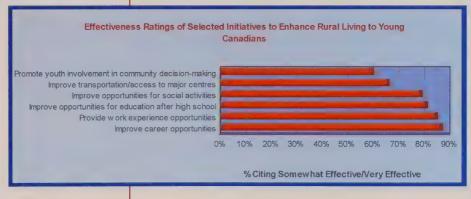
by Shannon Rogalski Statistical Officer, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

Because Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) works to represent the interests of all western Canadians, it is important to have access to up-to-date research on economic development issues. Rural communities in the West, for example, have experienced population declines over the last several decades. According to the 2001 Census, 20 per cent of western Canadians still live in these communities.

In 2000, Statistics Canada released the first phase of the National Rural Youth Migration Study entitled, Rural Youth: Stayers, Leavers and Return Migrants. The report looked at reasons behind the out-migration of youth from rural to urban centres. One significant finding indicated that the decrease in rural youth population was attributed to the inability to attract new youth, rather than to excessive out-migration.

provided financial support and are participating members of the steering committee for the study. R.A. Malatest and Associates, Ltd., a public opinion research firm based in Victoria, B.C., conducted the research.

Roundtable discussions revolved around the question: "What would it take to get you [rural youth] to consider either not leaving your rural community or returning (if you have already left)?" Several remedies discussed included:



The second phase of the study entitled, Rural Youth Migration: Exploring the Reality Behind the Myths, delved deeper into the issue by talking directly to youth and community leaders. What were the youths' aspirations and perceived opportunities regarding education, employment and preferred location to live? What were community leaders' perceptions about the need for post-secondary schooling, opportunities to create jobs and entrepreneurial self-employment opportunities for youth, and the availability of other community features for youth.

Phase Two was funded under the Canadian Rural Partnership. WD and several other federal departments

WD will continue to work with federal partners, the provinces and research institutions to examine issues of importance to Western Canada and to generate research that guides policy development across the region.

For a copy of the report, Rural Youth Migration: Exploring the Reality Behind the Myths, or other WD economic research, visit our Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/rpts/research/. Rural Youth: Stayers, Leavers and Return Migrants, along with many other reports on rural issues, can be accessed on the Rural Secretariat's Web site at: www.rural.gc.ca/research/research\_e.phtml.\*

# Thinking "Green" at

by Sherry Brownlee

Strong, sustainable communities thriving across Western Canada — at Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) this is not an abstract idea, it's an achievable goal.

WD is taking a sustainable approach to community development, and the **Infrastructure Canada Program** is one tool to achieve this goal. WD administers the program in the West in partnership with each of the four western provinces.

With a focus on "green" municipal infrastructure, the program is working with communities to build strong foundations for economic growth through priority projects, such as: water and wastewater systems, water management, solid waste management, recycling and energy efficiency.

The program is already seeing positive results.

New recycling programs and environmentally-friendly waste disposal are just a few tangible benefits.

Since October 2000, nearly 100 communities throughout Manitoba have received more than \$50 million from the **Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program (CMIP)** to improve, enhance and protect the environment.

For example, the CMIP and the City of Brandon provided \$1.9 million to the Westman Recycling Council for a new recycling facility. The facility will service Brandon's 40,000 residents, as well as surrounding towns and municipalities. It is expected to recycle a minimum of 5,000 metric tons a year.

"Thanks to the generous support from the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program and the City of Brandon, this new, much larger facility will enable us to divert even more material every year through recycling and composting," said Elisabeth Archambault, co-chair of the Westman Recycling Council.

Retrofitting or improving the energy efficiency of buildings and facilities owned by local governments ensures the long-term sustainability of community infrastructure.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program (CSIP) contributed more than \$2 million over four years to help fund over \$6 million worth of upgrades to lighting, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and fire protection systems to reduce energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, maintenance and operating costs, and emission of pollutants for seven of the City of Regina's major civic facilities. The project will result in savings of \$378,800 per year for the city.

The program also provided \$500,000 to the City of North Battleford to install an ultraviolet disinfection unit into its current filtration system, as well as additional monitoring systems for more effective plant operation at the F.E. Holliday Water Treatment Plant. The unit will increase the capacity to treat the water and enhance water quality and safety.

Clean, safe drinking water 'on tap' – for rural communities this is a major concern.

In December 2002, 43 Alberta communities received \$84.2 million through the **Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP)** for "green" infrastructure projects. "These are projects that will help protect our environment, maintain the quality of our air and water, and safeguard the quality of life we've come to enjoy as Albertans," said Minister Anne McLellan.

# ne Community Level

In the East Peace River region of Alberta, residents in Northern Sunrise County have depended on dugouts and drinking water trucked in from filling stations. In July 1996, in conjunction with Northern Sunrise County, the member-owned East Peace Water Co-op embarked on a nine year, \$3.9 million project to pipe drinking water to country residents. ICAP funding for a later phase of the project allowed for the extension of the water services. The completion of the project this fall will mean a total of 282 rural residences will be connected to the system.

ICAP and the East Peace Water Co-op are laying pipe to bring fresh drinking water to Northern Sunrise County.

Reliable drinking water has really made a difference. "It's a quality of life issue," said Wilf Petluck, chairman of the East Peace Water Co-op. "Over the years, we've had problems with chemical runoff and livestock wastes contaminating dugout water." He adds that dugouts also pose a safety hazard, and there have been incidents in which people have drowned.

Municipalities determine their green infrastructure needs and put those projects forward for funding.

Under the Canada/British Columbia Infrastructure Program (C/BCIP), the federal, provincial and local governments are investing a total of \$800 million in municipal infrastructure in urban and rural communities across the province over five years. To date, 103 projects have been approved, totalling in excess of \$274 million.

In B.C., the main focus is "green" – primarily water and sewer infrastructure projects. Specifically, access to safe, clean drinking water has been identified as a vital health priority for communities across British Columbia.

In December 2002, C/BCIP announced a contribution of \$100 million to the Greater Vancouver Water District to build a water filtration plant at Seymour in North Vancouver — the largest in Canada.

Through the Infrastructure Canada Program communities across the West are realizing immediate and long-term benefits – an improved quality of life today and new economic opportunities tomorrow.

For more information about the Infrastructure Canada Program, visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca. •

# Hostels a Viable Option for Young Travelers.... And a Great Business Idea

Provided by the CFDC of the S.E. Region of B.C.



Hostelling is an innkeeper's dream," said imon Howse. "You can handle so many nore customers than in a hotel."

to courtesy of the CFDC of the S.E. Region of B.C.

A successful entrepreneur does their homework and asks the basic question, "Will my business fill a need?" The answer for Simon Howse was, yes. He recognized the lucrative market for inexpensive hostel style accommodations suited to young travelers who spend their money on equipment and entertainment, not accommodations.

Located close to both Alberta and U.S. borders, the Fernie region offers tourists access to wilderness areas that appeal to outdoor enthusiasts. Howse took advantage of the opportunity to get in at the ground level just as Fernie began developing as a popular ski resort area.

Fernie's Grande Central Hotel was built in 1908. By

1999, however, the hotel's upper floors were condemned, the bar had deteriorated into a biker's hangout and the solid brick exterior was covered with cheap yellow siding. To anyone else, including the bank, the hotel was an unlikely bet. The banker suggested, however, that Howse visit the Community Future Development Corporation (CFDC) of the S.E. Region of B.C. Howse admitted that "a lot of

people thought I was crazy to take on the Central"—but not the CFDC.

With the help of a CF loan, Howse reopened the fully restored **Grande Central Hotel** in time for the 2000 ski season. He incorporated a rustic Rocky Mountain theme — fireplace and bar made of river rock, huge timber posts and dramatic colours and artwork — into the modern, funky hostel.

Howse gives the Community Futures staff a lot of credit for lending him the money to achieve success at the Grande Central. "They were so easy to deal with," commented Howse. "The loans manager was phenomenal — a real pleasure. He worked with me and established good communication right from the get-go. Instead of asking what I could do for him, he asked what he could do for me."

Howse plans to create a hostel system similar to the accommodations popular in Europe and Australia, and has already started work on his next hostel renovation project, The Fernie, another beat-up old hotel.

For more information about the Grande Central Hotel, call (250) 423-3343. To contact Howse and learn about his other hostel plans, call (250) 423-8674.

Community Futures Development Corporations across the West are funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), and are a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network. For information about the CFDC office nearest you, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/xindex.html. \*

# ACCESS MANITOBA

April - June 2003

## **Not Just Any Dessert Will Do!**

by Lee Gregg

Not for the weak-willed, a walk through **Dessert Sinsations** & **Design** will delight and tantilize the senses. From walnut sponge cake with bittersweet dark butter cream filling, to New York style cheesecake dipped in white Belgian chocolate with fresh lemon curd, you will feel as if you are slipping between heaven and earth!

Working from a church basement kitchen, Barbara O'Hara began her business in 1997 by designing and baking wedding cakes. In the spring 2000, with financing from the **Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba**, O'Hara opened her storefront location in Osborne Village.

"The Women's Enterprise Centre is an amazing organization," said O'Hara. "They provided the financial support I needed, and they continue to provide the resources and advice that help me to succeed. Women entrepreneurs who are looking for financial assistance should not overlook them, they are an excellent lender."

Customers will find a stunning display of wedding and theme cakes, an elegant designer showroom featuring unique, alloccasion giftware and a take-away counter filled with wildly delicious and sinfully indulgent desserts at the Osbourne store.

A "from-scratch bakery," Dessert Sinsations uses no premixes or preservatives, and specializes in catering to



customers on vegan, diabetic and gluten-free diets. O'Hara's corporate clientele has also taken advantage of her unique and exquisite centerpieces, and can choose from Waterford or Wedgewood, exclusive handmade paper and other beautifully designed gifts.

To experience your own *sinsational* encounter, visit Dessert Sinsations or for an appointment call (204) 284-4661.

For more information about the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba, visit their Web site at: www.wecm.ca.

# ScootAround North America . . . and the World!

by Lee Gregg



Are mobility problems putting your travel plans on hold? With assistance from **ScootAround Inc.**, your problems are solved.

ScootAround offers scooter and wheelchair rental services for mature and disabled travelers. Founded in 1997, the company rents scooters, wheelchairs and other mobility assistance machines in over 500 locations throughout North America, Europe, Australia and the Caribbean.

This service is made possible through the hard

work and determination of Lee Meagher and David Vincent, a sister-brother team who founded the company because they were unable to locate scooters while on vacation with their father who experienced decreased mobility after suffering a stroke.

"We were pioneers in a new industry," noted Meagher. "There was no research material specific to our business, but the **Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre** was extremely helpful in locating information that was very useful in building our business plan."

Further assistance was provided through Western Economic Diversification Canada's International Trade Personnel

**Program** (ITPP). Christie Procter, a graduate of the University of Winnipeg, was hired to assist with marketing ScootAround's services in the U.S. conventions market.

"Christie has broken a dam," said Meagher, who is thrilled with the company's growth in the conventions market.

"The ITPP has given me an amazing opportunity," indicated Procter. "I never saw myself in a business position until I came here. It's exciting to watch this company grow and I'm excited to be growing with it."

Meagher credits her company's recent success to WD's support. "Of all the government programs available, the ITPP is the best one out there," said an enthusiastic Meagher. "This year we have seen the company grow from three full-time staff to seven full-time and three part-time positions."

ScootAround's mission is to provide an easy, convenient way for mature and disabled travelers to have the freedom and independence to enjoy their vacations and other excursions, and not worry about their personal mobility.

For more information on ScootAround, call 1-888-441-7575 or visit their Web site at: www.scootaround.com.

The Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network and is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For more information, visit their Web site at: www.cbsc.org/manitoba. For information about WD's programs and services, visit: www.wd.gc.ca.

# Making Tomorrow's Products Better

by Lee Gregg

When Atomic Energy Canada Limited (AECL) decided in 1995 to decommission their Whiteshell Laboratories in Pinawa, the scientists and technicians from the Radiation Applications Research branch seized the opportunity to start their own company. Combining their talents and resources, they founded **Acsion Industries Ltd.** 

"Making Tomorrow's Products Better" is Acsion's motto, and with assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) they are achieving their goal.

Under WD's Strategic Initiatives program, they received a \$100,000 repayable contribution in August 1998 to purchase and upgrade the AECL assets and establish Acsion as an independent business.

In June 2001, the company received a \$375,000 repayable contribution under WD's Whiteshell Economic Development Assistance program to help replace an obsolete current electron beam (EB) accelerator. The new accelerator has provided Acsion with advanced EB technology capabilities.

"Acsion is committed to innovation through technology, research and development, and commercialization," said company President Chris Saunders. "By working with Western Economic Diversification and the National Research Council, our company was able to become the world leader in electron beam technologies."

Instead of using heat from an oven or autoclave, EB treatment is a stream of high-energy electrons from an accelerator. The electrons are sprayed onto products to produce specific effects,

such as: neutralizing pathogens in foods, sterilizing bandages and medical devices, or improving the properties of plastics to make them harder, stronger and more heat-resistant. Acsion also provides services in detoxifying waste streams and in the destruction of hazardous wastes.

Air Canada joined forces with Acsion in August 2001 to create

Medical supplies are one of many products that can be sterilized by electron beam technology.

ACETEK Composites, an aircraft repair and manufacturing company located in Winnipeg. ACETEK focuses on providing composite component repair services for the aerospace industry and is expected to create 270 high-tech aerospace jobs in Manitoba.

Acsion opened its doors in January 1998 with only five employees. Today, they have over 20 employees and are the only company in North America providing all the needed expertise and equipment in a single location to develop EB-based products.

For information on the services offered by Acsion Industries, call (204) 753-2255 or visit their Web site at: www.acsion.com.

# New Health Care Centre Fills Need in St. Laurent

by Lee Gregg

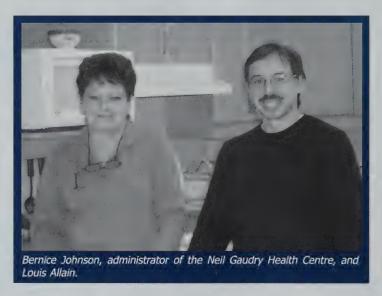
Recently cited by the Smithsonian Institute as a community of 'Métis cultural uniqueness,' the citizens of St. Laurent have something else to be proud of — the Neil Gaudry Health Centre, named after the late St. Boniface MLA who was an active member of this community and a role model for its youth.

With help from the Super Six Community Futures Development Corporation

(CFDC), the St. Laurent Community Development Corporation (CDC) was formed to make town priorities a reality. At the top of their list was an assisted living health centre. With \$7,500 in assistance from Super Six, a feasibility study was prepared. The result – the Neil Gaudry Health Centre opened in the fall of 2001.

"Henry Sikora of Super Six was very supportive of this initiative," said Louis Allain, CDC chairperson. "The study was instrumental in proving to the community stakeholders that they should rally behind the project."

Additional assistance was provided by the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM). "Maurice McCarthy and Lina LeGal of CDEM were there for the whole process," added Allain. "They helped to tailor the project to meet the



expectations of the federal and provincial governments, as well as negotiate with the Regional Health Authority."

The vacant Franciscaines Missionnaires convent was purchased by the St. Laurent CDC and renovated to house four Level 1 and 2 home care suites and one respite suite. It is unique in that it offers a transition level for the elders by providing the care and attention they need within a language and culture familiar

to them. This also allows the town to preserve its culture and heritage by keeping the elders in their community.

The Regional Health Authority operates the on-sight clinic, offering a family medical practice, physiotherapy, home care services and senior's resource council. The Centre has created nine permanent new jobs.

Super Six also provided \$3,000 to the CDC for a feasibility study that would see the Centre expand to include 10 new home care suites.

Super Six CFDC and CDEM are members of the Western Canada Business Service Network and are financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For additional information, visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.

# Alberta's Francophone Communities Open to the **Tourism Market**

by Carmen Carvajal

Churches, museums and historic and tourism sites guard precious remnants of the history of the first western pioneers — unique because of their linguistic and cultural duality. In order to better market their heritage treasures, communities across Alberta are carrying out several projects ranging from bilingual signage to site renovations.

Regional offices of the Association canadienne française de l'Alberta (ACFA) are inspiring and leading the projects. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Canadian Heritage, the Province of Alberta and other provincial and community organizations are providing funding and consultative support.

"Francophone communities are gradually becoming popular destinations for retired travellers and other visitors interested in heritage tourism," said Raymond Lamoureux, ACFA provincial secretariat's director general. Thanks to the efforts of both government and community organizations, visitors from Canada and around the world will be able to spend more time learning about and enjoying the many Francophone sites and attractions in Alberta.

One of the projects that WD and Canadian Heritage are supporting is the development of bilingual program activities, exhibits and displays in the Lac La Biche Mission. Located on the shores of La Biche Lake, this National Historic Site was one of the most important fur trade sites in Western Canada. Today, visitors to the Mission can learn about the first Francophone and Métis settlers in the West, and some of the first technologies introduced to the area, such as the sawmill and printing press.

Other Francophone tourism development projects recently completed or underway include:

- upgrades to the tourism information centre in Legal;
- nine historic murals displayed in Morinville's St. Jean Baptiste Park;
- repairs to the historic Duperron House in Lac La Biche;
- the transformation of Falher's old train station into a tourism information centre and the addition of an apiculture (beekeeping) interpretive centre.

"The Government of Canada is working to enhance the vitality of French linguistic minority communities," said WD Secretary of State Stephen Owen. "These projects will increase the number of Francophone and bilingual visitors to Alberta and will help create new job opportunities, services and products in the tourism sector."

Tourism development projects in the Peace River, Lakeland and the greater Edmonton region will help increase the visibility of Francophone communities in the West. They will help Canadians rediscover and better appreciate the uniqueness of their cultural heritage and history.

For more information, contact ACFA at (780) 466-1680 or visit their Web site at: www.francalta.ab.ca/acfa/provincial/ acfa/acfa.htm. \*



settled in Legal in 1901. (Photo courtesy of ACFA Regional Centralta)

# First Nations Historical Site an International Tourism Success

A small group of First Nations representatives had a vision of a place to rejuvenate their spirits and walk the paths, breathe the air of their ancestors. To talk, sing and dance in an atmosphere of tolerance

and respect. This vision became reality 10 years ago when Wanuskewin Heritage Park opened just outside of Saskatoon.

The park, located on a National Historical Site, provides visitors with a wide variety of experiences that make it a favorite tourism destination. It is increasing awareness, understanding and appreciation of the cultural legacy of the Northern Plains First Nations people.

In 2001, approximately 40,000 people visited the park. Remarkably, 25 per cent of these visitors were international, many coming from as far away as Europe, Japan and South America.

What is the attraction? You can experience a traditional pipe, sweat or

smudge ceremony. Interact with the Aboriginal culture through interpretative walks, song and dance. Stay in rustic tipi accommodations, dine on traditional foods and listen to evening storytelling around a campfire. Or, attend an Aboriginal Awareness Education Workshop.

Within walking distance, the park contains archaeological sites common to the Northern Plains – a medicine wheel boulder alignment, buffalo jump, tipi rings and more.

Dr. Ernest Walker of the University of Saskatchewan's anthropology and archaeology department has also identified 21 archaeological sites in the park. The majority of these are undisturbed, but some findings uncovered at Wanuskewin have international importance, dating back more than 8,000 years, making them older than Egypt's great Pyramids.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has supported Wanuskewin Heritage Park since its inception. In March 2002, Stephen Owen, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification and Indian Affairs and Northern Development, announced assistance that allowed the park to undertake repairs and improvements, and upgrade its computer system. "Building on our past support, WD is pleased to help Wanuskewin renew its visitor centre," said Secretary of State Owen. "This facility brings us together educationally and culturally to better understand the culture and spirit of the Indian Plains people. It is important, not only to the heritage of Canada, but the heritage of the world."

"WD's assistance is significant to the future success of the park," said CEO Sheila Gamble. "The changes and refurbished exhibit halls will expand Wanuskewin's international tourism destination status, and create opportunities for First Nations and non-First Nations people to work together to foster economic growth."

For more information about Wanuskewin Heritage Park, visit their Web site at: www.wanuskewin.com.



Mistawasis' little warrior, Bryton Arcand, is a member of the Wanuskewin International Dance Troupe. Photo courtesy of Wanuskewin Heritage Park

# Polar Bears, Polar Ice & Polar Memories

by Lee Gregg

Lying on the ancient shores of Hudson Bay, you can hardly think of Churchill, Manitoba, without thinking of polar bears, arctic foxes or the aurora borealis. Located at the intersection of three ecosystems – coastal, boreal forest and arctic tundra – this northern community is home to breathtaking scenery and a rich and varied wildlife, the ideal getaway for nature lovers and adventurers.

Canada's only Arctic seaport is also home to Louise Foubert and Dwight Allen, owners of **Polar Inn & Suites** and **Polar Adventure**<sup>TM</sup> **Clothing**.

Opened in 1990, Polar Inn & Suites is a charming  $3\frac{1}{2}$  star inn that provides full bilingual service for its national and international visitors. It prides itself on excellent customer service and a friendly, inviting atmosphere.

Wishing to develop the clothing line and expand the Inn's gift shop, the partners approached the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba (WEC). "We had all the ideas, but not the financial resources or space," said Foubert. "We are very happy with the assistance we received [from the WEC], as we were able to expand and grow our business within a much shorter time frame."

Polar Adventure<sup>TM</sup> Clothing is extreme cold weather clothing created by Foubert and Allen. Down-filled wind pants, parkas, anoraks and a uniquely designed photographer's parka are available in adult and children's sizes. In addition to selling and renting their unique clothing line, the all-glass gift shop also carries a variety of original paintings and carvings celebrating the area's Inuit and Aboriginal cultures.

Foubert, recipient of the 2001 Minister's Award of Excellence, and Allen also wrote the script and shot footage for *The Hudson Bay*, a video used to promote



Dwight Allen enjoys a snow-filled adventure in Polar Adventure\*\* Clothing.

Photo courtesy of Dwight Allen

the "polar bear capital of the world" in North America and Europe.

If you want to get up close and personal with polar bears, go Arctic scuba diving with Beluga whales, or experience the ethereal aurora borealis, a visit to Churchill will leave you with a lifetime of memories, and Foubert and Allen make sure your stay is unforgettable. For information and reservations call 1-877-765-2733 or contact the Inn by e-mail at: polarinn@churchillmb.net.

The Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba is one of four offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative in Western Canada and financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For information about their programs and services, visit their Web site at: www.wecm.ca.

# Investing in Climate Change Technology

by Linda Lee



Ballard Power Systems delivered heavy-duty fuel cell bus engines to DaimlerChrysler for a European Fuel Cell Bus Project - the world's largest fuel cell bus fleet demonstration program that begins operation in 10 European cities in 2003.

Photo courtesy of Ballard Power Systems.

Addressing climate change presents Canada with an important challenge to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Western Canada is well positioned to play a leadership role and benefit from the global shift toward new technologies and industries that will achieve this goal.

From investments in the development of agriculturally-based emission reduction protocols in Alberta, to the Greenhouse Gas Technology Centre at the University of Regina, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is working with industry and academia on innovative projects in key resource sectors.

WD has provided investments in several important projects to help meet the Kyoto protocol requirements and improve the quality of life for all Canadians.

For example, British Columbia is recognized as a global centre for fuel cell technology. Fuel cells provide an

environmentally-friendly source of energy, a solution to greenhouse gas emissions and an opportunity for significant economic development.

Fuel Cells Canada, a non-profit organization, was created by public and private sector partners to foster industry growth and promote the fuel cell industry in Western Canada. WD and the Province of B.C. each provided \$6.5 million through the Canada-B.C. Western Economic Partnership Agreement for fuel cell development. Over \$12 million of this investment is available to fund demonstration projects that employ this technology.

Fuel cells have the potential to become the energy source in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. They are widely regarded as an important tool for addressing the threat of global warming. Fuel cells convert natural gas, methanol or hydrogen into electricity without combustion. When supplied with hydrogen, their by-products are non-polluting heat and water vapours.

Overall, fuel cells will be an economic source of growth including spin-offs of parts and subsystems, as well as engineering, design, testing, training and research services to this knowledge-based growth industry. By 2020, it is estimated that the potential market for fuel cells will be \$145 billion worldwide, creating 15,000 jobs for every billion dollars in demand.

Other WD-funded climate change projects include the design and operation of a Web site to showcase commercial technologies and processes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or improve energy efficiency by the Environmental Services Association of Alberta, and providing support services for the Manitoba Climate Change Task Force.

For more information on the other climate change projects, visit the WD Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.\*

## Sustainable Development for Small Business What does it all mean?

by Anastasia Lim

Policy and Planning Officer, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

Sustainable development. Kyoto. Climate change. Greenhouse gases. Recycling. Environmentally-friendly. What do these terms mean and how do they affect you, the small businessperson? To some, this jargon is overwhelming. Doesn't this only apply to larger corporations? Really, what does this all mean?

Let's start with some basics, what is *sustainable* development? According to The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), sustainable development (or SD for

short) is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their

own needs." In layman's terms, SD is based on the efficient and environmentally responsible use of all of society's scarce resources

 natural, human and economic. It is the balanced triangle of social, economic and environmental factors essential to satisfy human needs and improve quality of life.

Let's use an example: water quality. In its most simplistic form and in the context of SD, poor water (environmental) results in sick citizens. Sick citizens translate into an unhealthy community (social). And, an unhealthy community is an unproductive economy (economic). See the pattern? One side of the triangle depends on the other two. This may be an

oversimplification, but it gives you a picture of what SD can be.

As a business owner, how does this affect you? Well, have you thought of how much money you might save by having an energy efficient photocopier that turns off when not in use? What about benefits of recycling toner cartridges or buying recycled paper? Car pooling or taking public transportation? These little steps can help the environment and your community while also benefiting your business' bottom line.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and its partners in the

Western Canada
Business Service
Network are
exploring innovative
ways to inform the
communities we

serve of how to implement SD into their operations and benefit from including these practices into their

daily operations. WD will also be developing its 2003 Sustainable Development Strategy.

These initiatives will inform our communities of the linkages to federal strategies, yet make a difference for western Canadian communities. Stay tuned for information about these new initiatives in the sustainable development world in future issues of *Access West.* 

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# WD and the "World's Best" Program for SME Technology Assistance

by Dick Bourgeois-Doyle National Research Council of Canada

Thousands of Western Canada's most innovative small and medium-sized firms work with the National Research

Council of Canada (NRC) and take advantage of the NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP).

NRC-IRAP reaches over 12,000 firms annually across Canada through its national network of 260 highly-skilled Industrial Technology Advisors (ITAs) — typically graduate engineers and scientists with many years of industrial innovation experience. There are over 75 advisors in the West working at the community level and on the shop floor with companies looking for new ways to exploit technology-based business opportunities and confront technical challenges.

For many years, industry leaders and entrepreneurs have heralded NRC-IRAP as the

"world's best" program of its kind. A recent independent review found the program was better than its counterparts in other countries – both for the variety of services provided and knowledge of the people delivering it. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the NRC bring this service to western Canadian firms through a

partnership involving collaboration on a regional level and financial transfers.

"WD is certainly a great partner and shares in NRC-IRAP's success," said Dr. Arthur Carty, president of NRC. "Hundreds of firms in Western Canada have benefited from this partnership, and we look forward to building upon it in the future."

NRC-IRAP builds on the foundation of its people with extensive global networks and contacts. It not only partners with organizations such as WD at the regional level, but also links innovative firms to more than 1,000 public and private sector business service providers through the Canadian Technology Network (CTN).

Contact the NRC-IRAP Regional Office nearest you by calling toll-free at 1-877-994-4727 or visit their Web site at: http://irap-pari.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca. ◆





1-888-338-WEST

www.wd.gc.ca

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

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# Can my business keep up with technology?

Software and hardware upgrades. Systems maintenance. Staff training. With new information and communication technologies, or ICT, products constantly hitting the market, it is challenging for entrepreneurs and managers to make wise investments.

Can my business keep up with technology? Can I afford it? Outsourcing may be an option.

- Instead of buying technology that inevitably becomes obsolete, systems experts can provide ICT management on an "as needed" basis.
- Leasing computer or communications equipment means you don't bear the cost of outdated technology. Upgrades are built into the contract; you look after repair and maintenance costs and software installation and upgrading.
- Growing sophistication of distance applications allow computer service firms to monitor and maintain equipment through remote access on a fee-for-service basis or monthly retainers.

- Application service providers can host the software you need on their server, while providing you with high-speed access. They maintain and upgrade the software as needed.
- Outsource the hosting of broadband content, but keep interactive functionality in-house. This means that Web site visitors do not slow the speed of customer interaction applications.

Ask yourself a few important questions before making your technology choices.

- How do your customers interact with you on-line?
   What technology do they use?
- Do suppliers expect you to be on-line?
- What is the potential for generating revenue or cost savings?
- What is your current ICT infrastructure? What are your connectivity requirements? Do you have a cable connection or ADSL?

This information will help your business determine the strategic approach it should take, allowing your business to realistically keep pace with technology and make the best use of your operating dollars.

### Access West

July - September 2003

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

## A Message from The Honourable Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) In February, the Government of Canada announced its 2003 Budget. The Budget offers, among many things, strong support for social programs, infrastructure for growing cities, and measures designed to boost small business growth and development.

Budget 2003 will also enable Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) to plan and enter into multi-year agreements, such as the Western Economic Partnership Agreements, with the four western provincial governments and other partners, and expand the scope of its strategic

investments in support of western Canadian communities and economies.

From fisheries and softwood lumber, to health and agricultural technologies, to trade and investment, WD works to address issues important to western Canadians and to find solutions that make sense for westerners — solutions that provide a relevant response to the full range of regional development challenges and opportunities, and that help build a stronger West, and a stronger Canada as a result. •

# Planning for the Future... Identifying Western Priorities

by Brenda Thibault

. Senior Advisor, Headquarters, WD Edmonton

Keeping you informed about the plans and activities of your government is essential to a democratic system. To help, federal government departments and agencies submit an annual Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP) to Parliament identifying their priorities for the upcoming year. These reports establish a clear commitment to how each department will deliver programs and services that benefit Canadians.

The RPP is a statement of each department's strategic direction. Stakeholders and issues. Risks and challenges. Department policies, new programs and services, and how they fit into Government of Canada or regional priorities. Strategic relationships with other jurisdictions and non-government organizations.

These high-level planning documents focus on the outcomes departments expect to achieve, including objectives, performance indicators, milestones, timeframes and resource estimates. They also identify stakeholders, issues, risks and challenges. Parliament and other users rely on this information to make informed assessments of departmental plans and funding requests.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) focuses it programs and activities on priorities important to Western Canada: *Innovation*, *Entrepreneurship* and *Sustainable Communities*—

directions that are in line with Government of Canada's economic development priorities.

WD is continually refining its performance indicators to identify its results and achievements. By making improvements to results-based planning and performance reporting cycles, the Department will be able to enhance its strategic objectives and priorities.

WD uses strategic partnerships with other levels of government, the private sector, academia and communities to maximize its investment in Western Canada's most valuable resources — the talents, energies and ideas of its people. The underlying goal of all of the Department's activities is to ensure that all western Canadians, including Aboriginals, youth, women and residents of remote and northern communities, have an opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, the economic success of the West, and Canada.

Western Economic Diversification Canada has made – and will continue to make – a difference by acting as a catalyst for change that results in a measurable impact on the sustainable and diversified growth of the western Canadian economy. •

For complete details of WD's 2003 Report on Plans and Priorities that was tabled in the House of Commons on March 27<sup>th</sup>, visit: www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/plans/default\_e.asp.

### **WD Releases Its P**

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has delivered programs and services that have evolved to meet the needs of the West for over 15 years. While the Department has undertaken periodic client satisfaction surveys, it had never fully examined and assessed its flagship program — the Western Diversification Program (WDP) — for its relevance, success and effectiveness.

The WDP is the Department's umbrella program for programs and services, such as the First Jobs in Science and Technology Program, International Trade Personnel Program and other initiatives that support WD's strategic directions – *Innovation*, *Entrepreneurship* and *Sustainable Communities*.

WD's new director of Audit and Evaluation, Robert Bellehumeur, brought enthusiasm and an impartial viewpoint important to the review process. "Everything is changing today, and WD is part of the change. A powerful tool to support change is to bring in new people with different skills and perceptions. I took a very personal interest in the evaluation that will help to establish standards or benchmarks that WD can use in the future."

An independent private sector firm, The Macleod Institute, worked with Bellehumeur to provide the Department with a retrospective appraisal of the WDP, with an expanded view that considered WD's overall activities. The evaluation relied on client surveys, stakeholder consultations and departmental reports and statistics. Not only does the report provide the

Government of Canada with historical data about the Department, but also key information that will help WD focus its future efforts.

#### Yes, WD is relevant!

The study confirmed that there is still a strong need for a regional economic development presence in Western Canada and it identified three of WD's significant strengths. The Department is very responsive to a broad range of regional and local challenges. It is effective at forming partnerships that helped leverage funding from

other government
sources — for
every \$1 of WDP
investment, another
\$1.50 was raised.
And, WD is
extremely
flexible,
supporting a variety of
government priorities
over the years.



WD's business development programs – the International Trade Personnel Program and First Jobs in Science and Technology Program — have helped create 1,991 jobs in the West.

Results overall indicated that the most frequent incremental benefit of WD's assistance was longer-term project viability, larger project scope and increased

# ormance Appraisal

leveraging of funds. Clients also indicated their projects would not have proceeded without WD's assistance.

#### What did WD learn?

While the Department's diverse and flexible portfolio is a strength, it is also a challenge. Over the years, WD's priorities and programs have changed to meet the evolving needs of the West, and to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. WD needs to balance this responsiveness with being proactive, clearly defining its programs in terms of measurable results and improving its collaborative efforts to maximize investment in Western Canada.

Diversification de l'économie de l'Ouest Canada

And, being strategic in its thinking, programming and how WD operates was also reinforced. A key stakeholder commented, "The more strategic WD is, the more effective it will be."

#### Where do we go from here?

Western Economic Diversification Canada is both powerful and flexible, and every step taken should be made with the idea of making it a world leader in regional development.

The Department has endorsed the findings of the evaluation. The report provides an excellent platform to continue discussions that will enhance WD's effectiveness and the future direction of the Western Diversification Program.

Bellehumeur's audit and evaluation group has proposed a new management tool, a Framework for Strategic Management, as an answer to the findings of the evaluation. The Framework is a roadmap that will help to clarify WD's vision and align its operations and processes to produce consistency and maximum synergy.

While the full effects of the evaluation take time to implement, WD can now look strategically at how it will do business in the future, with realistic goals for program and operational directions in place in two years.

For complete WDP Evaluation details, visit the WD Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/audit/default\_e.asp. •

# Program Offers Relief to Communities Caught in the Softwood Lumber Dispute

by Michelle Soucie Senior Business Officer, WD Vancouver

Forest-dependent communities across Canada have been negatively impacted by punitive actions taken by the U.S. government against the Canadian softwood lumber industry. In October 2002, Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal announced federal funding totalling \$246.5 million in support of a national softwood lumber adjustment package.

Included in the package is the Softwood Industry and Community Economic Adjustment Initiative (SICEAI) that was designed to address the adjustment and transition of impacted communities. The \$110 million, two-year initiative announced by Industry Minister Allan Rock in December 2002 will be delivered and implemented by regional development agencies. In the West, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is working in partnership with local Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) to identify and develop potential projects and initiatives that support diversification and development of new economic opportunities.



SICEAI assistance is targeted specifically to those forest-dependent communities that demonstrate a negative impact on local employment directly linked to U.S. duties against Canadian softwood lumber exports announced in 2002. The initiative helps these communities create opportunities for economic development in order to stimulate investment and job creation. Specifically, it provides funding for projects in Canada's forest-dependent communities that address local adjustment priorities and which have demonstrable community support.

Priority areas under the SICEAI include:

- innovation and value-added forestry
- community capacity building
- diversification into new economic opportunities
- infrastructure that encourages growth

Eligible recipients are not-for-profit organizations, including: municipalities and municipal organizations, corporations, sole proprietorships, community development organizations, community groups and associations, as well as Aboriginal organizations.

There is a two-step process for applications under the initiative. First, applicants submit a two-page proposal to their local CFDC. If the proposal meets SICEAI guiding principles and criteria, the applicant will be invited to develop a full business or project plan (step two).

It is expected that the bulk of the SICEAI will be targeted to communities in British Columbia. Data from Statistics Canada's 2001 Labour Force Survey noted that B.C mills employed 35,000 people, or 44 per cent of those employed in the industry across Canada. B.C. also accounts for 40 per cent of all softwood lumber produced in Canada.

For information about the CFDC nearest you, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/xindex.html. •

# ACCESS

### **MANITOBA**

July - September 2003

### Can We Talk?

by Lee Gregg

Yes we can! In over 110 languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Welcome to **CanTalk Canada Inc.**, a global telecommunications service and call centre specializing in comprehensive language and cultural services to the business community.

President Maureen Mitchells, winner of the Building Business 2002 Women Entrepreneur of the Year Award, took her experience as a marketing professional dealing with international language issues to launch CanTalk Canada. By combining Canada's rich linguistic resources with the talents of accredited interpreters and translators, the company provides high quality, customized language communication services in a growing global economy.

"It's important for all businesses to understand that their client base is ethnically diverse," stressed Mitchells. "We have found that you achieve a uniquely competitive advantage when delivering your services in the language of your customer's choice. By offering people the opportunity to respect their customer's culture and language, you attract new customers and maintain customer loyalty in Canada and abroad."



"CanTalk liberates communications through innovative personalized solutions," commented President Maureen Mitchells.

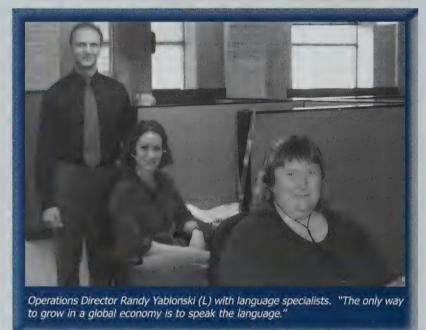
Launched in 1995 with four part-time staff, CanTalk today employs 200 language specialists, contracts with 2,000 interpreters and translators, and has 250 remote operator agents. With this team of language specialists and Mitchells' technology experts, CanTalk offers one of the most comprehensive value-added service portfolios in the industry.

Along with hard work and perseverance, Mitchells had some help along the way from the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre. "I found the biggest piece of gold walking

continued on next page

#### CanTalk Speaks Your Language

continued from cover



into the Business Service Centre," said an enthusiastic Mitchells. "The Centre had sources of information that were difficult to find anywhere else."

Innovation is key to CanTalk's success. Expanding on the initial focus of translation services, the company has branched out into calling cards, directory assistance, business consulting, billing services and e-business support.

Among the innovative products developed by CanTalk is a software program that tracks over 35 customer-specific call details and content for marketing and/or technical purposes. Another program tracks, analyzes and then forecasts call

volumes and language requirements. The benefits of these programs provide CanTalk with the ability to handle over 600,000 calls a day from 82 different countries with half the staff of other call centres...and pass along significant savings to their customers.

The company also developed an innovative fraud detection and monitoring system to protect clients from the large number of fraudulent telecommunications calls. This proprietary software was developed specifically for the telecommunications industry. Capable of identifying 98 per cent of all fraudulent calls, it offers clients protection from Internet credit card fraud.

Where in the world would you like to do business? With over the phone interpretation, translation

services, telemarketing services in the language of choice, telecom billing and collections, long distance services, and more – anywhere you like!

For information on the services offered by CanTalk Canada, call 1-800-480-9686 or visit their Web site at: www.cantalk.com.

The Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network and is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For additional information, visit the Centre's Web site at: www.cbsc.org/manitoba.\*

## Winnipeg Success is All Fun & Games!

by Lee Gregg

Michel Durand was scouting for ideas to start a home-based business, when visiting friends from France brought him the game, *Settlers of Catan*. A game fanatic, he was hooked and a business idea began to take shape.

A computer technician, Durand developed an e-commerce Web site for game enthusiasts. JogoCanada.com was launched in February 1999, but the business quickly outgrew his home. As a Francophone entrepreneur, Durand visited the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM) who helped him develop a business plan for a storefront operation.

Winnipeg game aficionados can now visit a spacious retail store that incorporates an innovative concept for a 'toy' store — *Try it, you'll like it!* Durand developed a 1,300 square foot dedicated gaming area complete with five large tables where customers can try out the more than 1,000 multilingual games and puzzles they sell. They also host league nights for enthusiasts to challenge competitors in games of *Settlers of Catan, Lord of the Rings* and *Yu-Gi-Oh*.

Durand is particularly proud that **Jogo Canada** won the right to host the Canadian championships for *Settlers of Catan*. The winners participate in the international championship held in Essen, Germany, every fall.

"The services provided by CDEM's Suzie Lemoine and Isabelle Déry are really valuable when you are starting out in business," said an enthusiastic Durand. "You [Francophone

entrepreneurs] should take advantage of CDEM's services, as the more people you can bounce your ideas off, the better. You can't do it alone, and CDEM is there to help."

For more information on Jogo Canada, call 1-866-666-5166 or visit their Web site at: www.jogocanada.com.

CDEM is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network and is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For more information, visit their Web site at: www.cdem.com.



## Village Reclaims Its Beach

by Lee Gregg

Derived from the Cree winnipi for murky waters and osis for little, the Village of Winnipegosis has a history rich in natural beauty and heritage. From furs, lumber and fishing, to agriculture and cattle, Winnipegosis has continued to redefine itself since the area was first settled in 1741. Now, this charming town has turned its attention to tourism.



"This project would not have been possible without the financial assistance we received from the Parkland Community Futures," said Terry Tomlinson, Winnipegosis town secretary. "It was an excellent partnership between the town, Elks Lodge and the CFDC."

With \$5,000 in financial assistance from the **Parkland Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)**, the **Elks Lodge** has turned their run-down beach into a community and tourist location. The charity group works for the betterment of the community and considered the beach a focal point for the area's residents, day-trippers and campers.

Situated close to recreational facilities and campgrounds, the beach had become littered with stones, broken glass, weeds and an eroding shoreline. Months of hard work have restored a wonderful beach that complements the town's campgrounds, park, golf course, tennis courts and museum, which houses the *Myrtle M*, one of Manitoba's last wooden freighters.

"We are currently

looking at other projects for 2003 that will include developing a beach walkway with rest spots and upgrading our marina to include a boat launch," added Nestor Barsewsky, the Elks Lodge member who initiated the restoration project.

A remnant of the glacial Lake Agassiz, Lake Winnipegosis is an ideal location for camping, boating and fishing holidays. For additional information, visit: www.onlinepro.com/wpgosis.

Parkland CFDC is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network and is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For information, visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.

### **Prairie Landmark Saved**

Almost every prairie image includes the grain elevator. Today, the changing rural landscape has seen many of these landmarks disappear.

In Westlock, Alberta, grain producers were frustrated with the possible shutdown of yet another elevator. Recognizing the negative impact the closure would have on farmers and the business community, a small group of producers and Tawatinaw Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) researched the viability of the Westlock elevators and studied similar independent operations. Their findings were shared with area producers and the business community.

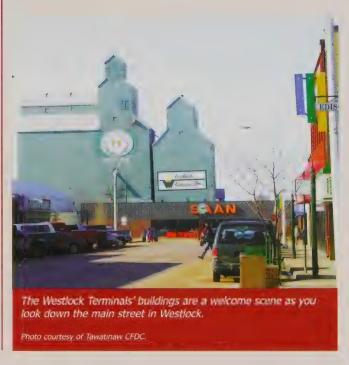
A 10-person committee, including seven producers and three town representatives, proceeded with a plan to purchase the Westlock elevators from Agricore United.

In April 2002, the Government of Alberta approved the New Cooperative Act that allowed for the formation of "new generation co-operatives." **Westlock Terminals (NGC) Ltd.** became the first new generation co-op in the province. Critical to the purchase was the co-operative's ability to raise investment dollars from non-producers. In less than six weeks, they raised \$1.279 million.

"We could never have gotten this far without the help and support of Tawatinaw Community Futures. Their help and expertise was extremely important in making this happen," said the co-operative's chairman Dave Felstad. The co-operative took over the elevators in mid-November 2002, and they are already planning to modernize or build a new elevator in the next few years.

The Tawatinaw CFDC received the Minister's gold award for this project in February 2003 at the Alberta CFDC annual gala. "Through this project, an innovative co-operative was formed to keep the Westlock grain elevator open, and maintain the economic impact of agricultural trade in the region," commented Stephen Owen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development).

Similar projects have been undertaken across the West where the closure of elevators would mean the decline of the rural population and the municipal tax base of communities. The efforts of Saskatchewan's **South Central CFDC** kept the doors open on 14 community elevators. Two elevators were converted to pulse crop cleaning and processing facilities. Others are providing storage, grain cleaning services, distributing chemicals and fertilizers, or buying/selling feed and livestock products. •



# No Point Waiting To See What Develops

by Lee Gregg



Sergio Camorlinga (seated) works with University of Manitoba students with Masters degrees in computer science and computer engineering. While performing research on behalf of MIRG, the students also use their work for their thesis – a win-win situation for both the students and MIRG.

With a little curiosity and lots of ingenuity, medical science has improved lives since it began experimenting with x-rays in 1895. From MRIs and CAT scans, to x-rays and ultrasound, scientists have contributed to preventing and detecting disease and improving the management and treatment of patients.

With help from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), these technologies have been brought into the 21st Century.

In 1998, WD provided \$1.25 million towards the development of 'filmless' radiology in Manitoba, the first such initiative in North America. The St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre designed and introduced new technology that provides

storage and secure electronic transmission of radiology images.

Physicians and radiologists at St. Boniface Hospital, Health Sciences Centre, Grace Hospital and the PanAm Clinic with access to a computer and high-speed Internet can use this technology to view a patient's radiology images from their desktop computer without the delay of transporting x-ray film, the conventional means of transferring images.

A spin-off of the initiative is the **Medical Informatics Research Group** (**MIRG**) who is creating the next generation of these technologies. By partnering with TR*Labs* in Winnipeg and the universities of Manitoba and Calgary, MIRG is working on new prototype projects that include designing databases to locate medical data held electronically in different sites and enhance infrastructure that allows the secure transfer of medical data.

Sergio Camorlinga, a software architect at MIRG, is very enthusiastic about the projects currently underway. "The partnership between the St. Boniface Hospital, the private sector and the federal and provincial governments is unique in Canada. It provides us with the framework to research, develop, license and export our medical informatics technologies."

Dr. Blake McClarty, Program Director of Diagnostic Imaging at St. Boniface Hospital, added, "Without WD, none of this would have been possible."

MIRG is working hard on the next step — enhancing this technology to extend it to other hospitals and clinics in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba.

For more information, visit the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre at: www.sbrc.umanitoba.ca.

# Welcome Aboard the Information Highway, Strathcona County!

by Stacey Brockhoff
Province of Alberta

Residents of Strathcona County, just east of Edmonton, are enjoying the benefits of a new high-speed computer network.

With \$119,740 in federal and provincial funding through the **Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP)**, the County installed fibre optic connections from its administration building to the Glen Allan Recreation Complex, Sherwood Park Transit Centre and local RCMP detachment.

Mayor Vern Hartwell says the technology significantly improves customer service in the county. "Our goal is to continually improve communication with our residents. These additions will make it convenient for our residents to get up-to-date information about their community."

The Glen Allan Complex uses a special system to manage its recreation programs, handle credit card and direct debit transactions, and store and display member photographs for quick and easy verification. All of the functions for this program require a fast and reliable network connection.

In March 2003, a computer kiosk was installed at the Sherwood Park Transit Centre. "The intent is that in the future, while people wait for their bus, they will be able to do business with the

County, such as apply for permits or check their tax account," noted Hartwell.

A high-speed fibre optic connection replaces a low-speed dial-up line at the RCMP detachment. This allows data from the traffic collisions tracking system to be readily available to county staff.

Strathcona County, enjoying the benefits of high-speed connections, now has another ICAP project scheduled for 2003. This project will provide high-speed wireless networking to three of its rural recreation facilities and make possible the establishment of a high-speed wireless link to two of its fire stations.

Mike Bagnell stops to check the bus schedules and latest Strathcona County news on the public Internet klosk at the Sherwood Park Transit

Peda cooling of Shattania (2001).

Rural and remote telecommun-

ications and high-speed Internet access for local public institutions are priorities of the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program. In the West, the Infrastructure Canada Program is delivered by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For more information about other ICAP projects in Alberta, visit: www.icap-pica.ca.

# A New Tool for the Country Doctor's Medical Bag

by Sherry Brownlee

The country doctor with his trusted black medical bag is a fond memory. Just what was in that bag was always mysterious, but combined with the doctor's expertise it was part of a lifesaving double act. Hospitals and fancy treatments were far away. Families relied on their local doctor and the health care resources at hand.

Fortunately, rural health workers today are not as

isolated and can share resources through the **Prairie Association for Innovation in Continuing Care Inc.** (PAIC). The non-profit association consists of health districts and facilities in the Prairie provinces.

PAIC undertook an innovative project, with assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), to develop a system that offers both care planning support and charting, resulting in an increased quality of care for patients. Southwestern Saskatchewan's **Cypress Health Region** stepped forward to pilot the project and implemented CARE Manager, the new electronic clinical care management system, in the Eastend Wolf Willow Health Centre.

Eastend users access the application over CommunityNet, a partnership initiative also supported by WD, that connects rural health facilities via high-speed Internet.



The benefits of the PAIC program are already being felt at the Eastend health facility where consistent 24-hour care for residents, enhanced communication between health care providers and improved access to each resident's clinical chart are creating more time for handson care.

David James, Director General of Program Development and Strategic Services for WD

Saskatchewan, points out that the needs of the health care sector are driving the development of this technology. "The health care provider defines the need and, in this project, a western Canadian technology can ease some of the paperwork burden for long-term health care organizations to allow for increased quality of care for their patients."

The good news doesn't stop there. Over the next year, the CARE Manager system will be implemented in long-term care facilities in Shaunavon, Leader and Maple Creek.

Shared expertise and resources are changing the landscape of rural health care. Today's patient can expect options in care that the doctors of yesteryear could only dream of offering.

For more information about WD initiatives, visit our Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.

# Telegraph Creek Reaches for the Mountain Top

Telegraph Creek, located in the Stikine River region of northwestern British Columbia, wanted Internet connectivity in a region that could only be serviced by slow and costly long distance phone connections. Rather than sit on their hands, a group of residents established the Telegraph Trail Internet Society (TTIS) to build a wireless community-wide local area network to provide the Village of Telegraph Creek with high-speed Internet access.

Next, the Society worked to bridge the digital divide by building a remote mountaintop antenna site that could broadcast a signal to the rural residents of the Stikine Valley, and located a suitable antenna site on top of Blueberry Mountain.

Blueberry Ventures Inc., a newly incorporated local company, was contracted to design, prefabricate and build the mountaintop antenna site. TTIS is now working to provide the infrastructure needed to enable the village and rural area to communicate with the world via high-speed Internet connectivity that will allow real time video conferencing.

"By achieving this goal, we will provide improved communications technology that will enhance the economic and social well-being of the region," said Dan Pakula, TTIS spokesman.

The Internet system provides subscribers with always-on, relatively high-speed connection at an affordable subscription fee. Among the clients to the service are the Tahltan Band Council Office,

Telegraph Creek Community Health Nurse, Three Sisters Haven Society, Tsedu Recreation Centre, residents and local businesses.

The original project began in 1998 when Lucent Technologies agreed to use Telegraph Creek for a joint venture pilot project. Add to the mix a dedicated group of residents and assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada's Innovation and Community Investment Program, Industry Canada's Rural Community Access Program, the B.C. Community Network Association and the National Research Council, and the Blueberry Mountain project became a reality. The communication shelter/antenna array project now provides a template for other remote communities looking to improve Internet service to their region. •



If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# Check It Out! www.wd.gc.ca

by Nancy Girard-Bégin Web Master, WD Ottawa

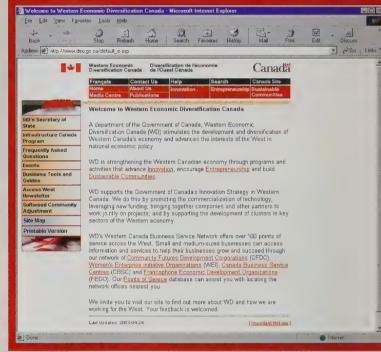
In the on-line world, image — and content — is everything!

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) recently unveiled a whole new look for its Web site – www.wd.gc.ca. Visitors will enjoy a more consistent design and better visual appeal. Our new site map and standardized menus make the site easier to navigate.

The *Media Centre* — home of the on-line *Access West* — now offers a list-serve option allowing subscribers to receive WD announcements, a specialized search function for quick information retrieval and a new print-friendly feature allowing you to print pages with text only.

The changes adhere to the Government of Canada's Common Look and Feel (CLF) standards that provide practical direction on Web development issues such as federal identity, appearance, navigation, accessibility and bilingualism. Users can easily identify a federal site, and navigate from one site to another to find the information they need quickly.

The work has just begun! The re-launch of WD's Web site marks completion of Phase I, but improvements to the structure, presentation and function of the resources and materials available on the site will continue through 2003.



Visit www.wd.gc.ca to find tools for entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a business, news about WD's recent investments in the West, economic and policy research, and information about programs and activities that are developing the western Canadian economy.

Can WD better serve you on-line? We welcome your suggestions or comments: web.comments@wd.gc.ca.



1-888-338-WEST

www.wd.gc.ca

**Government** Publications

# ACCESSWEST

CA1 WE -A18

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

October - December 2003

# Opportunity Doesn't Always Knock – Entrepreneurs *Build* the Door to Opportunity!

Did you know that a newspaper fired Walt Disney for his lack of ideas, or that he went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland?

Like Disney, through perseverance, careful business planning, market research and trial and error, small businesses have made their mark, especially in Western Canada.

A March 2003 BMO Financial Group report, entitled *In Search of Canada's Small Business Hotbeds*, reinforced the importance of small business to the Canadian economy and its impact in the West.

Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Victoria and Saskatoon topped the list for the greatest number of small businesses (30 to 38) per 1,000 population. Equally impressive, seven of the top 10 centres with a population of at least 10,000 were also located in the West – Grande Prairie, Fort St. John, Swift Current, Lloydminster, Terrace, Williams Lake and Grand Centre. These communities boasted between 41 and 48 small enterprises per 1,000 population.

Dominant industries in any market can be major factor influencing per capita rankings. The report noted that Alberta's dominant industry, for example, is oil and gas. Subsequently, small knowledge-based, professional, scientific and technical industries supporting this sector are disproportionately high. It also noted that 98.9 per cent of all Canadian agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting enterprises with a payroll, are small businesses – industries all prominent in the West.

Small business hotbeds are evident across the country, but it's obvious that western Canadians are contributing to the economic success and competitiveness of the West, and quality of life in their communities.

Small Business Week is being celebrated across Canada, October 19-25<sup>th</sup>. Western Economic Diversification Canada, and its partners in the Western Canada Business Service Network, salute the entrepreneurial spirit of small business entrepreneurs who have had vision, persevered and succeeded in today's competitive marketplace.





### Access West

October - December 2003

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

## A Message from The Honourable Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) Small business *is* the economic engine of Western Canada. A 2001 study prepared by the Western Centre for Economic Research noted that the number of small businesses per capita is 40 per cent higher in the West than the rest of Canada. As the source of nearly 80 per cent of new jobs, entrepreneurship is a powerful force for prosperity.

To fuel this valuable source of economic growth, Western Economic Diversification Canada supports the willingness of entrepreneurs to take risks, devise new products and services, and create jobs and opportunities in

communities across the West.

Western Economic Diversification Canada's commitment to entrepreneurship is helping to make small business entrepreneurship an option for all western Canadians willing to make their dreams a reality. Our Western Canada Business Service Network partners ensure that entrepreneurs have direct access to products and services that help them to establish a business or make it grow.

Western Economic Diversification Canada and its network of over 100 partners recognize the western Canadian entrepreneurial spirit celebrated during Small Business Week.



# Flexibility the Key to Northern Community Futures Services

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) take a grassroots approach to delivering programs and services that help build strong and vibrant communities through economic development and diversification. They tackle broader issues that integrate social and economic needs.

As the rural landscape changes with the disappearance of grain elevators and the jobs they provided, CFDCs are busy helping communities adjust all across the prairies. On the West Coast, changes to the fisheries and how communities struggle to survive has been a challenge.

For Community Futures offices serving northern regions, basic services we take for granted are often a luxury for residents — health care, transportation, running water and sewer services, banking, shopping.

These stories will provide just a taste of the issues faced by four northern Community Futures offices in the West.

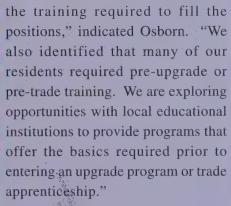
#### Identifying job skill requirements in northern Alberta

Mackenzie Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) serves 25,000 people in a vast 87,000 square

kilometer region in northwestern Alberta.

A stumbling block for the region is its remoteness, perceived or real. Businesses often discount opportunities because of this perception. In spite of this, unlike other rural areas of Canada, the region is experiencing exciting growth. MEDC General Manager Mike Osborn says that regardless of its diverse population and wide distances between communities, the industry sectors are "cranking" - oil

"MEDC is assisting with an Employer's Need Assessment survey to identify the jobs available and



This work with help to achieve longterm economic growth, enhance the quality of life and retain young



and gas, forestry, tourism, retail, health and wellness. people in local communities.

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

#### Tourism strategy an opportunity for northern Manitoba

Canada's oldest CFDC is located in Lynn Lake, Manitoba. Brad Stoneman has managed the **Northwest Manitoba Community Futures Development Corporation** since it opened in 1986.



"In the Northwest, social development goes hand-in-hand with economic development. We have a great loan program for entrepreneurs, but first we address the basics," noted Stoneman. "Life skills, basic literacy, upgrading and skills training are where we start."

Traditional cultural pursuits, beliefs and

practices have eroded in this heavily Aboriginal-populated region. In addition, there is a staggering 90-95 per cent

unemployment rate and no major employer or primary industry. Despite these bleak realities, the region remains a vast, pristine wilderness.

One of the projects undertaken by the CFDC is a collaboration with stakeholders to formalize the Northwest Manitoba Regional Tourism Strategy that may provide the best opportunities for investment, job creation and prosperity for the region according to Stoneman.

Some of the priorities of the strategy include the provision of basic services like running water, sewer and accessibility to communities. "We have one community that has only one phone—it's a pay phone. And, there is also only one hospital serving the region."

#### Fledgling Saskatchewan forestry contractors find support

Key stakeholders from northern Saskatchewan's forestry sector believe that in order to ensure the sustainability of small contractor operations, the contractor's technical and management skills need to be enhanced.

**Beaver River CFDC**, in northwest Saskatchewan, saw an opportunity to address this gap and played a key role in a **Forestry Incubator** pilot project. The

incubator is not a typical business incubator — it has no walls. Contracted mentors work with clients at their bush operations and in their communities.

"The goal of a Forestry Incubator," commented Patty Conkin, general manager of Beaver River CFDC, "is to generate a core of knowledgeable and experienced northern forestry contractors who will improve the viability and sustainability of the forestry sector."

#### Opening new markets to northern B.C. gift producers

With a region the size of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland combined, the CFDC of Peace Liard is located in northeastern B.C., with offices in Fort St. John and Dawson Creek.

The manufacture of giftware products presented significant opportunities for employment and economic diversification in the region. Limited product lines, management and marketing skills, weak financial situations and the inability to find appropriate markets were just a few obstacles faced by area entrepreneurs.

The CFDC of Peace Liard and its partners helped provide a solution – the Northern Exposure Gift

Company. The marketing company helps producers by evaluating a product's design, workmanship, originality, packaging, price and marketability. They also test market the products in retail outlets in the region; products are also available online at www.northernexposure.ca.

"The Northern Exposure Gift Company is a logical step for producers to ensure they are given the best possible opportunity to succeed," said Northern Exposure manager Terri Hanen. "We fill a crucial gap. We offer retailers a single supply source and are able to better represent the small producers. And, producers benefit from a continuous source of income when we purchase their quality products directly." •



In its operation, the Forestry Incubator will promote the transfer of knowledge, practical skills and problem-solving abilities to the developing forestry sector entrepreneurial community.

Beaver River CFDC has applied for additional funding to expand and build on the lessons learned in the pilot project.



## The Economic Transformation of Western Canada

by Jason Brisbois Chief Economist, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

An important role of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is creating a better understanding of the western Canadian economy and the factors that influence its economic growth and development. This leads to more insightful policy development by government, and more informed planning and decision-making on the part of western businesses.

In May, the **Public Policy Forum** brought together more than 170 influential Canadians in Calgary to discuss the economic transformation that is taking place in Western Canada and its implications for the country. WD was one of 18 government and private sector organizations sponsoring the event.

Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Works and Government Services; David Kilgour, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa); Alberta Premier Ralph Klein; and B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell attended, along with the four western provincial cabinet secretaries, federal and provincial deputy ministers, private sector executives, industry interest groups, academics and Aboriginal leaders.

Conference presentations suggested that the mediumterm economic outlook for western Canadians poses some serious challenges. According to a recent Conference Board of Canada study, although the oil and gas sector is performing very well, others such as agriculture, forestry and mining are experiencing significant problems. U.S. protectionism, farm subsidies, declining commodity prices, drought, unresolved native land claims and emerging labour shortages were some of the challenges discussed.

Jim Frank, vice president and chief economist of the Conference Board of Canada, noted that over the past 20 years the western Canadian economy has performed very close to its potential. The past strong performance makes it more difficult to create a sense of urgency about the challenges facing future economic prosperity in the region.

Canada West Foundation President Roger Gibbins observed that in order to address the challenges facing Western Canada, greater reciprocity between the West and the central government is required. Dr. Gibbins challenged conference attendees "to recognize regional realities and aspirations and to build a positive vision of the West that is based on the challenges of the 21st Century, not on the grievances of the 20th Century."

A report that outlines details from the conference is available on the Public Policy Forum Web site at: www.ppforum.com.



# ACCESS

## SASKATCHEWAN

October - December 2003

## Computer Science Grads Find Work in All the Right Places

by Cameron Zimmer

You've just graduated from university and your future is murkier than the career counsellor said it would be. The

list of classified job ads on your desk is crossed out with emphatic red strokes and overly polite messages are pouring in from companies looking for experience you don't have.

Three University of Regina computer science graduates faced this daunting scenario until they were hired as computer programmers by **iQmetrix Software Development Corp.**, a subsidiary of **Jump.ca**, one of Saskatchewan's leading information technology (IT) companies, with help from Western Economic Diversification Canada's **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program**.

"We weren't looking at this program to provide cheap labour, but to build our talent pool within the company and to build the company," says Debbie Mills, director of software development for iQmetrix.

iQmetrix hired Ryan Zens and Eduardo Trombetta to develop RetailiQ, its retail management software program. In three years, they've progressed from doing basic application maintenance to becoming senior programmers.



"I would recommend this program. Without it, it's hard for new grads to find work, especially in IT where it

seems like everything is going downhill," Zens said.

Because of the reputation built by Zens and Trombetta, the company hired another new graduate, Darin Shaw, who is grateful for the opening the First Jobs program and iQmetrix have provided.

"The best part has been the opportunity to work in the field that I'm interested in and educated for," Shaw said. "I'm fortunate enough to be doing exactly what I wanted to."

iQmetrix was able to provide these work opportunities because WD's First Jobs program provides eligible businesses with funding up to 50 per cent of a science or technology graduate's salary for one year to a maximum of \$20,000. The program allows graduates to discover, develop and implement new technology, as well as train others to use it.

For more information about iQmetrix and its integrated business solutions, call (306) 790-4545 or visit their Web site at www.iqmetrix.com.

## Litzenberger Starts a

by Regan Brady

Yorkton skateboarder, Kelly Litzenberger, ollied out of the skatepark and onto the local business scene in 1998.

A passion for skateboarding and snowboarding and a lack of exposure of the sports in the area prompted Litzenberger to open **Revolution Snow and** 

**Skate**. The shop sells high-end skateboards and snowboards, as well as brand name shoes, casual athletic clothing and safety equipment.

"At the time I decided to open, there were very limited options. I just became fed up and decided it was time for a change and a chance to do it better," Litzenberger said. "I had to convince people that the business could not only survive, but that skateboarding was something that could help improve the recreation services for the city."

But before Litzenberger made the transition into the world of small business, he attended a **Ventures Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)** management training course that aids young people in their quest to become self-employed. The program assisted the

entrepreneur to develop a business plan and put his vision into action. From there, he worked with them to secure funding for his initial start-up costs, to purchase inventory and

renovate the store.

"Kelly's success is an excellent example of the assistance that Ventures CFDC can provide to young entrepreneurs, even more so because he was involved in a training project that was administered by the Community Futures," says Kendall Hudye, office administrator at Ventures CFDC.

Litzenberger says that without the help of the CFDC, he would not have been able to start his business.

"I've done really well. I have been staying steady, but

bigger. Luckily, I have a great group of customers that have a

every year the numbers get

love for skateboarding and will do

anything to keep riding."

## evolution in Yorkton

The business community has also noticed Litzenberger's accomplishment. He was nominated for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce "Celebrate Success" Awards Gala in 1999 and 2000.

"It proves that our program can guide young people to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams," Hudye said. "Ventures CFDC's help and support has allowed Kelly to become a successful entrepreneur, and we are very proud of that."

Since 1997, Ventures CFDC has assisted eight successful young entrepreneurs, like Litzenberger, with loans totalling more than \$94,000.

For more information about the products and services available at Revolution Snow & Skate, call (306) 786-7669 or visit: www.revolutionskateboarding.com.



## **Ring Those Phones!**

by Regan Brady and Cameron Zimmer

"The human voice carries entirely too far as it is...and now you fellows come along and seek to complicate matters," Mark Twain said after the invention of the telephone.

With the advent of the Internet over one hundred years later, people still find it hard to adapt to changes in technology. The Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC) has encountered this reluctance

with "Talk to Us" — an interactive Web site resource that brings business information to the Web-surfer's fingertips.

"People are afraid to click on *Talk to Us*. They're not sure where they'll go and people wonder if someone's going to knock at their door," says Michelle Grella, a *Talk to Us* user. "But I think it's a good tool and it's not that complicated."

This service allows clients to speak with a CSBSC information officer over the phone who will direct them to business information on the CSBSC Web site and sends the information directly to their computer screen.

Accessing *Talk to Us* is a simple process that only requires the ability to be online and use the phone at the same time. Just log onto the Web site at: www.cbsc.org/

**sask**. A "Help" icon leads to a short video presentation that introduces *Talk to Us* to the client.



CSBSC Business Information Officer Bryanna Bergerman guides clients to the information they need using the Talk To Us tool.

After viewing the Talk to Us instructions, the client will provide their name and phone number, click "Connect," and their phone will ring to connect them with an Information

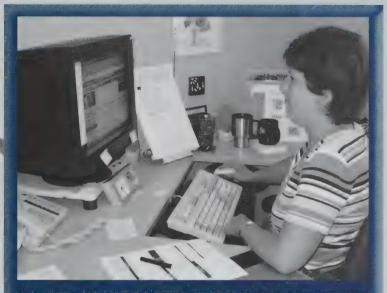
Officer. Once the session begins, the officer can send any information a client requests — whether it's a link to another Web site or a document on topics such as business planning or specific government programs — straight to their screen.

Talk to Us is especially useful in rural Saskatchewan where entrepreneurs can save a long drive into Saskatoon or Regina to find the information they need.

"It will give rural clients the same service as a walk-in client," says Diana Matsuda, manager of the CSBSC in Saskatoon.
"It's as close as we're going to get to being able to collaborate with a client without actually sitting across a desk from them."

As accessible as this resource is, last year very few CSBSC clients made use of *Talk to Us*. Although 3,000 clicked on the *Talk to Us* icon, less than a hundred followed through and completed sessions with business information officers. This low rate of users is similar across Canada.

Matsuda recognizes that *Talk to Us* is in a transition phase, but believes people will gradually become more familiar with the technology and less hesitant to use it.



Michele Grella found the Talk To Us feature on the CSBSC Web site simple and easy to use.

With increased exposure on other federal Web sites such as BusinessGateway.ca and Exportsource.ca, Matsuda is certain that more and more people will see *Talk to Us* as another point of access to the information they need to succeed in business.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre is a joint initiative of Western Economic Diversification Canada and Saskatchewan Industry and Resources. It offers entrepreneurs information on starting a business, developing a business plan, marketing strategies, financing and regulatory matters.

## **Bookkeeping Program**

by Regan Brady

Vicki Heppner, manager of Visions North Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) in La Ronge, was looking to fill a gap in bookkeeping programs for entrepreneurs, when an accounting student from the Sagehill CFDC was brought to her attention. The student had walked into an accounting class with receipts in a shoebox and an idea was born.

To develop the idea, Heppner and her staff at Visions North worked collaboratively with Diana Matsuda and Emily Cherneski of the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC), Ken Evett of the Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN) and consultant Cherylynn Walters.

The result, **Bookkeeping from a Shoebox** — a practical bookkeeping program for beginners.

"The program meets the needs of the target audience and it doesn't make any assumptions about knowledge or cultural," Heppner said. "Being from a remote community, the target audience doesn't come in with the same skill set." Heppner says the program's target is typically a low literacy group with a more interactive style of learning.

Matsuda, manager of the CSBSC, says the Shoebox program is a constructive way to provide Aboriginal entrepreneurs with a set of skills they will need to be successful in business. She noted that although the program stemmed from a need expressed by the Centre's Aboriginal Advisory Committee and was developed through the ABSN, all entrepreneurs will have access to the how-to sessions.

The sessions run three to four days and include intensive training in all aspects of financial business practices. Each participant receives a shoebox that contains all of the information and materials they need to set up their own basic bookkeeping system.

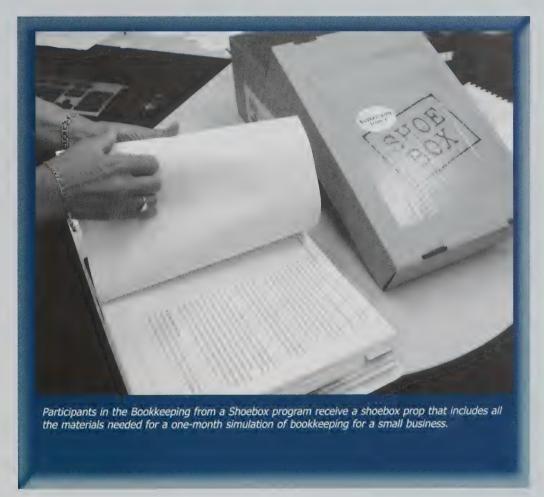
In addition to pilot testing, Heppner has delivered the program in two northern communities. "It was one of the most incredible experiences of my life. At the end of the week, the women were so empowered," Heppner said.

Other provinces and territories may be interested in adapting this program for their own needs, Matsuda said after she took the idea to a Canada Business Service Network national manager's meeting.

## hinks Outside the Box

"We also think the program would lend itself extremely well to online delivery; however, that is a project for future consideration. Our immediate concern is to begin training potential trainers to deliver the Shoebox seminars so they can be offered to entrepreneurs throughout Saskatchewan," Matsuda added.

For more information about Bookkeeping from a Shoebox, call the CSBSC at (306) 956-232 or Visions North CFDC at (306) 425-2612.



## A Network of Professionals Ready to Work for You

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) established the Western Canada Business Service Network to ensure that western Canadians have direct access to products and services that support their economic success. The network is a partnership of organizations with over 100 points of service across the West where entrepreneurs can find what they need to establish a business or make it grow, with services ranging from practical information and funding options, to counselling and support.

In addition to WD's office in Saskatoon and Regina, network partners in Saskatchewan include:

#### Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre

122 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N Saskatoon SK S7K 2H6

(306) 956-2323

1-800-667-4374 www.cbsc.org/sask 1925 Rose Street

Regina SK S4P 3P1 (306) 780-8331

#### Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan

#230, 3850 Hillsdale Street Regina SK S4S 7J5

(306) 566-6000

http://sk.gazel.ca

#### Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.

#112, 2100 - 8th Street E

1925 Rose Street

Saskatoon SK S7H 0V1 (306) 477-7173

Regina SK S4P 3P1 (306) 359-9732

1-800-879-6331

www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca

#### **Community Futures Development Corporations**

Beaver River CFDC, Meadow Lake

(306) 236-4422

East Central Development Corporation, Broadview

(306) 696-2443

Meridian CFDC, Kindersley

(306) 463-1850

Mid-Sask CFDC, Outlook

(306) 867-9566

Newsask CFDC, Tisdale

(306) 873-4449

Northwest CFDC, North Battleford

(306) 446-3200

Prince Albert and District CFDC

(306) 763-8125

Sagehill Development Corporation, Bruno

(306) 369-2610

South Central CFDC, Assiniboia

(306) 642-5558

Southwest CFDC, Swift Current

(306) 773-0900

Sunrise CFDC, Weyburn

(306) 842-8803

Ventures CFDC, Yorkton

(306) 782-0255

Visions North CFDC, La Ronge

(306) 425-2612

Provincial CFDC Association:

Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan Inc., Regina

(306) 751-1922

www.cfps.sk.ca

## Are You Feeling Inventive?

If you have a great idea, but don't know if it's good enough to turn into a commercially-viable product, then Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has an easy online tool just for you!

Visit the **Inventors Guide** on WD's Web site

- www.wd.gc.ca/tools/inventors/. WD

developed the reference tool to help creativeminded entrepreneurs determine if their idea will
make it in the marketplace.

It can be used to develop a business plan and undertake market research. You can learn how to protect your idea and obtain a patent in Canada. Even help direct you to lenders and financing. The Guide is full of tips, leads, information and links

to useful resources.

Remember, there are many factors involved to bring a product to market. This guide is just one step on the road to the successful launch of a product. Inventors should be sure to seek advice of an expert.

Build a Better

Community

New Online Tool Helps Build Sustainable SMEs

by Anastasia Lim
Policy and Planning Officer, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

In the April 2003 issue of *Access West*, the "Sustainable Development for Small Business" article alluded to upcoming initiatives in an area of growing concern—sustainable development. The Western Canada Business Service Network partners, with support from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), worked collaboratively to create a stronger product in this area for small and medium-sized enterprises.

WD and its network partners are proud to launch the new **Sustainable Business On-line Resources** tool at: www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/ SustainableBusiness/.

Offer Green Web Cul Costs Products and site offers information. Save the tools, resources and Environment case studies to assist with the implementation of sustainable development practices in your day-to-day operations that Sustainable will make your business better. development means adopting strategies and activities that meet your business and stakeholder needs today, while protecting, sustaining and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future.

## Local Fashion Turns Heads on International Stage

by Cameron Zimmer

Naming her clothing manufacturing business after the Japanese word for warrior was Danika Wright's warning to the fashion world that she was about to spin a different kind of women's streetwear.

"I wasn't liking what I was seeing on the streets," said the Regina designer in a CBC television interview. "I wanted something more cutting edge."

Since kicking off Senshi Gear Inc. in November 2001, Wright has confidently stepped onto the world stage. A feature in Flare Magazine and a spot in Calgary's high-fashion gala, Artrageous, have established her as a trendsetter in daring streetwear.

Her "future forward" designs and their overnight success were developed during years of studying fashion at LaSalle College in Montreal and fashion marketing at Ryerson University in Toronto. Today,

he Apparel and Textile Association of skatchewan training centre in Regina provides enshi with the computer-aided drafting schnology needed for design, and essential atting and sewing services. the bold, urbane appeal of the Senshi clothing line is selling out in Canada's major cities, including Saskatoon and Regina.

To breed this national success so far from the Toronto and Montreal fashion hubs seems extraordinary. But as Wright continues to capitalize on local connections, it's clear that her accomplishments have more to do with strategy than coincidence.

"When it comes to fashion, there are very few businesses here, but there is lower overhead and it's a lot easier to network," says Wright.

The Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (W.E.) contributed to Wright's quick rise to recognition with a \$20,000 loan. The Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) also provided a \$15,000 loan for Senshi's start-up costs, as well as advice and support through a mentorship program.

"They helped me a lot when I had questions, and I have a mentor," says Wright of CYBF. "I do their whole program."

Both W.E. and the CYBF are non-profit organizations supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada that offer lending and advising services to Saskatchewan entrepreneurs.

# Exploring the Pristine Waters off Vancouver Island Spells Success for Young Entrepreneur

In 1998, Jonathan Grant happened upon a diving shop while traveling in central Africa. Although an unlikely place to start a diving career, he commented, "As soon as I put my head underwater, I knew this is where I belonged."

Today, 23-year-old Grant is the owner of **Rockfish Divers**, a multilingual scuba diving and underwater video/photography school in Brentwood Bay, located on Vancouver Island, B.C.

Since opening in March 2003, Grant has been busy, and being close to some of the world's best dive sites has definitely helped. Offering service in

English, French and Spanish, he not only teaches diving and underwater video and photography, but also offers a boat charter service to experienced divers. And, he also works with the academic and scientific marine community on projects such as video mapping the ocean floor and filming underwater documentaries.

Despite his quick business success, getting his feet wet as an entrepreneur took time. A certified diving instructor at age 18, Grant said it was really hard to get the business off the shore and into the water. "I was so young and the banks weren't interested in financing my business."



As a budding Francophone entrepreneur, Grant visited the Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (SDECB). "Vincent Portal and a team at SDECB helped me build my business plan

helped me build my business plan until it was very strong," said Grant. "Their help proved to be what I needed to get a loan."

"Expertise in his environment, an ambitious mind, energy – Jonathan had all the ingredients to be successful," said Portal, an economic development officer for SDECB. "With a solid business plan, together we visited VanCity Savings Credit Union and he was able to secure a

line of credit. This allowed him to leverage a loan from the Business Development Bank of Canada and buy his boat."

Business is growing rapidly for Rockfish Divers. Grant said he is working on hiring his first employees to help keep up. His future plans include teaching scuba diving to high school students, with emphasis on the French immersion schools, and doing more film work.

To learn more about Rockfish Divers, call (250) 884-9681 or visit: www.rockfishdivers.com.

## Creative, Tenacious — "Parts" of a True Entrepreneur

by Lee Gregg

"He displays a true entrepreneurial spirit by pursuing opportunities, taking initiative and never losing sight of his goals." This resounding endorsement Jenny Petersen, business analyst with the Winnipeg River **Brokenhead** Community **Futures** Development Corporation (CFDC), is for the

OWN A PICK-UP

"Dennis is enthusiastic and committed to the business venture." says Jenny Petersen of her client, Dennis Swampy.

creative and tenacious entrepreneur Dennis Swampy.

A stroke in 1996 and triple-bypass surgery a year later didn't slow down this motivated individual. Unable to continue working as a bush cutter, Swampy scouted around for business ideas until he identified a niche market. In November 2002, with the support of family and friends, he opened an automotive parts store, The Parts Place, in Sagkeeng First Nation Reserve, Manitoba.

The CFDC provided Swampy with extensive business training and assistance to develop a business plan. After successfully completing the Self Employment Assistance Program, he was eligible to receive financial assistance through the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program that recognizes the special needs of persons with a disability.

Working closely with Peterson, Swampy secured additional funding from the Indian and Northern Affairs Opportunities Fund and from Tembec Paper Group's Sagkeeng Economic Development Fund.

"Jenny is amazing," said Swampy. "She was very helpful; very good to me. If it wasn't for her, this business would never have been possible."

Unable to find a suitable building, Swampy built from scratch, breaking new ground by securing a permit for his business as opposed to obtaining

a Band Council Resolution. Several community members from Sagkeeng were hired to construct the building and one part-time position has been created.

The Parts Place serves primarily First Nations communities along the eastern shore of Lake Winnipeg, providing new, used and rebuilt parts, small engine parts, automotive supplies and new and used tires. The business has signed supply contracts with two First Nations communities for parts and automotive supplies for their government and commercial vehicles.

By planning for success and working smart, Dennis Swampy is providing a service for his community and a new career for himself. For more information, call (204) 367-9740.

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program is delivered by CFDCs across Western Canada. For more information or a listing of Community Futures offices, visit Western Economic Diversification Canada's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca. •

## Time is Money in the Oilpatch

by Laura McNabb

American statesman Benjamin Franklin once observed that lost time is never found again. In the highly competitive petroleum sector, lost time can also mean lost revenue. Hamdon Wellsite Solutions Ltd. used Western Economic Diversification Canada's First Jobs in Science and Technology Program to increase production through its optimization services.

The company hired a Computer Systems Technology graduate, Nathan Nilson, through the First Jobs program to help develop the *Wellsite Wizard* software program. The benefits of the program to industry are numerous. It minimizes operating inefficiencies for oilfield companies, maximizes production time and, ultimately, increases profits.

Wellsite Wizard requires data from three sources — field measurements from the wellsite, well completion data from the oil company, and reservoir data from the Alberta Energy & Utilities Board (EUB). The program directly accesses the EUB database and eliminates considerable time and effort to collect information. With Wellsite Wizard, the company is confident of utilizing the most accurate and recent data in a timely fashion.

Company president Omar H. Hamdon has a vision for this software tool outside the Canadian energy sector. The optimization program is being translated into languages such as Russian, with a view for use in foreign markets within the next year.

"The software has improved our turnaround time significantly," said Hamdon. "Client assessments that used to take up to a day can now be completed within a

few hours. Western Economic Diversification Canada's First Jobs program has made a significant impact in terms of realizing our success."

Hamdon Wellsite Solutions Ltd. is a growing company. Since inception, they have gone from one to five full-time employees and four contract workers.

For more information about this growing Alberta company, call 1-888-448-3303 or visit their Web site at: www.hamdon.net.

The First Jobs program provides funding assistance to hire recent science and engineering graduates. As well as providing the businesses with valuable technological expertise, the program also offers young graduates opportunities in areas related to their field of training. This helps ensure that there are people with the skills and education necessary for Canada to compete in the new knowledge-based world economy.



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# The Pioneer Spirit that Built the West has Found a New Frontier – Small Business Ownership

A unique partnership of several integrated organizations—the Western Canada Business Service Network—has over 100 points of services across the West that help make small business ownership an option for western Canadians.

Western Economic Diversification Canada's network partners include: Canada Business Service Centres, including an Aboriginal Business Service Network; Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs); Francophone Economic Development Organizations; and offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative. This powerful network works at the local level to ensure western Canadians have direct access to the products and services that support their economic success.

New and emerging entrepreneurs can access services and information required to start or grow a business. Services

range from marketing information and funding options, to business counselling and support.

In 2002, network partners responded to over 691,904 requests for information, provided more than 128,839 advisory services and trained 65,848 clients. Together, the Women's Enterprise Initiative offices and CFDCs provided loans to over 16,600 western entrepreneurs by the end of 2002. And, the \$429.5 million in loans these partners provided leveraged over \$575 million in funding from other sources.

If you're interested in learning more about the programs and services offered by this network of professionals, visit the WD Web site at www.wd.gc.ca and click on Business Service Network.\*



1-888-338-WEST

www.wd.gc.ca

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WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

January - March 2004

## Agriculture...a Way of Life in the West

Golden fields of wheat, pastures with grazing cattle and orchards heavy with fruit are all part of Western Canada's spectacular panorama. Despite changing trends, agriculture continues to be a vital component of life in the West.

In May 2003, the Canada West Foundation (CWF) released the *State of the West 2003: Western Canadian Demographic and Economic Trends*. The report is part of the CWF's Building the New West Project, a multi-year research and public consultation initiative funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the Kahanoff Foundation.

Not surprisingly, the report indicates that 85.2 per cent of Canada's farmland is located in the West, with Saskatchewan and Alberta accounting for 70 per cent. The industry is dominated by cattle and grain farms, and to a lesser degree by fruit trees and nuts, vegetables, berries or grapes. And, while the number of farms and farmers drops, the average farm size has increased.

But fluctuating low profit margins and issues like drought and the mad cow crisis have hit the sector hard in recent years — a reminder that the West needs to diversify its traditional resources. Or, find new ways to improve the industry.

Government

If you're outstanding in your field, Western Economic Diversification Canada and its partners have programs and services to help you establish a business or make it grow. You can access programs that help evaluate the potential of new inventions or hire a recent post-secondary graduate for science, technology or export-related projects. And, there are services to support business planning or to access capital.

For information about WD's programs and services, visit www.wd.gc.ca. For a copy of Canada West Foundation's various reports, visit their website at: www.cwf.ca.



## Access West

January - March 2004

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada

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#### Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

## **Building Partnerships** to Meet the Needs of Urban Aboriginals

As the Aboriginal population in Canadian cities grows, so do the challenges they face. In a number of cities, poverty is disproportionately concentrated among Aboriginal people. New partnerships will better address the needs of urban Aboriginal people and enable this growing group to play a stronger role in making our cities — and their own lives — more vibrant and prosperous.

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, the Government of Canada launched its Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) by kickstarting a \$25 million, three-year **UAS Pilot Projects Initiative**. Working in partnership with provincial and municipal governments, Aboriginal and non-government organizations, and the private sector, the initiative will use pilot projects focused on local priorities in eight Canadian cities, including Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg.

This approach recognizes that local communities are best placed to develop solutions that meet their opportunities and challenges. It also recognizes that all governments, and the communities they serve, need to work together to respond to pressing urban Aboriginal issues.

The pilot projects are designed to:

- respond effectively to the needs identified by communities;
- align federal programs with those of provincial and municipal governments and other efforts to respond to local priorities;
- test innovative policy and programming ideas; and
- improve the socio-economic conditions of urban Aboriginal people.

Government of Canada departments and agencies involved in this initiative include: the Privy Council Office, Human Resources Development Canada, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Justice Canada, the National Secretariat on Homelessness, and in the West, Western Economic Diversification Canada.

For more information about the strategy, visit www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/interloc or www.wd.gc.ca.\*

## Federal-Provincial Investment a Boost to Western Canada

by Anna Classen

· Senior Policy Analyst, WD Edmonton

Economic development is a shared responsibility and a goal of both federal and provincial governments. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the four western provincial governments take this responsibility seriously and are joining forces to boost economic growth and the quality of life in communities across Western Canada.

In September 2003, WD Secretary of State Stephen Owen announced a multi-year funding commitment with each of the four western provinces. Cost-shared equally between the federal and provincial governments, these new Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPAs) will see a total of \$200 million invested in the western Canadian economy over the next four years.

Under each provincial agreement, \$50 million will be allocated to targeted federal and provincial priorities, including innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable communities.

"These agreements are built on collaboration and innovative ideas that are the key to unlocking opportunities for western Canadians," said Secretary of State Owen. "Working together, we can create economic opportunity and a more sustainable prosperity for all."

This investment builds on previous agreements with the western provinces that were very successful. WEPAs have:

- leveraged an additional \$458 million from the private sector and contributions from other government resources;
- helped create approximately 120 new businesses, a number that is expected to grow to over 575 over the next five years;
- invested nearly \$500 million in buildings, equipment and projects;
- helped create over 1,300 full-time jobs; and
- strengthened federal-provincial partnerships and joint efforts that diversify the western Canadian economy.

Each of the four agreements is consistent with national economic priorities, while addressing the unique needs and opportunities of each province. Through joint federal-provincial planning and decision-making, and by supporting strategic initiatives, the agreements ensure that overlap and duplication are minimized, and federal-provincial relationships are strengthened.

Western Canada must continue to diversify its economy and develop more value-added goods and services to remain competitive nationally and internationally. Diversification and innovation is key to higher productivity, incomes and standard of living.

Together, we are building a stronger West, and a stronger Canada.

For more information, visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.\*









## Cities - Today's Realities

by Lisa Legault
Senior Business Officer, WD Edmonton

With 80 per cent of Canada's population living in cities, it is important to face reality. This increasingly diverse group is looking for a quality of life that is becoming more challenging for cities in terms of growth and pressures on the environment and infrastructure, and the demand for economic development and high-valued jobs.

Over 400 government and business leaders, academics, researchers and community leaders gathered at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, September 9-10<sup>th</sup>, to take part in the **Strategies for Urban Sustainability Conference**. The national conference provided a forum to raise awareness of

the challenges faced by Canada's large urban centres, explore a coordinated approach to urban sustainability, and examine innovative tools that can be used to improve the sustainability of urban centres.

The conference featured speakers from all three levels of government, prominent researchers and the private sector. Together they sent a clear message — Canada's cities are in trouble, and are no longer regarded internationally as examples of what to do right. Aging infrastructure, deteriorating streets and highways, booming suburban fringes and growing inner-city social problems are all putting increased pressure on already cash-strapped cities.



Sir Peter Hall, one of the world's most renowned urban planners, warned that building strong cities is a fundamental ingredient in Canada's ability to remain competitive on the international stage and maintain its high standard of living. He added that fixing cities requires close cooperation between the three levels of government.

This conference was a prime example of that cooperation. The event was sponsored by the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta Municipal Affairs, and Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

## d Planning for Tomorrow

In her remarks, WD Deputy Minister Oryssia Lennie said, "Western Economic Diversification Canada is proud to sponsor and co-host this conference because it is a positive and necessary step toward generating a better understanding of the factors that will sustain vibrant Canadian cities and healthy communities in the future."

As reported by the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, many urban problems are inextricably linked with federal and provincial policies on key issues such as immigration, housing, healthcare and education. Ontario MP Judy Sgro, chair of the Task Force, noted in an interview with the *Edmonton Journal* that, "The most

recent federal budget was a shift in the right direction." The February 2003 budget dedicated \$3 billion over the next decade to help Canada's cities repair aging roads, leaky pipes, crumbling bridges and other infrastructure, and earmarked millions more for housing.

Municipalities called on provincial and federal leaders to consider a "new deal" — one that gives them the power to tap into new revenue sources, rather than just collecting property taxes and user fees. Some of the solutions presented and discussed included an increased portion of the federal gasoline tax, implementation of a sales tax benefiting municipalities, and municipal gambling and liquor taxes.



WD Deputy Minister Oryssia Lennie moderated a panel discussion of Government of Canada officials whose departments are responsible for an important piece of the federal government's urban agenda.

As Edmonton Mayor Bill Smith said in his closing remarks, "It is not just up to the federal and provincial orders of governments only to solve the problems of cities. Municipalities must work even harder to find sustainable solutions on their own."

For more information about the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, visit: www.liberal.parl.gc.ca/urb/home\_e.htm.

## **Indigenous Entrepreneurs Share Prosperity Worldwide**



In August 2003, indigenous entrepreneurs from around the world met in Toronto to discuss how they could embrace world trade as a new mechanism for shared prosperity.

The 1st World Summit of Indigenous Entrepreneurs was organized by the World Trade University Global Secretariat, in partnership with BMO Bank of Montreal, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Industry Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency. It provided a global forum for entrepreneurs from a variety of industries, as well as those wishing to do business with them.

Participants were diverse – a broad mix of representatives from indigenous tribes and groups, countries and regions of the world. They represented commercial interests in food and agriculture, information and communication technology, textiles and fabrics, arts and crafts, energy, e-commerce, manufacturing, tourism and natural resources management, to name just a few.

The summit looked to: define, shape and influence the things that matter most to indigenous entrepreneurs globally; provide a forum for international joint ventures, networking and partnership opportunities; and to facilitate dialogue and understanding between entrepreneurs, governments, multilateral agencies and private-sector organizations.

By engaging entrepreneurs from around the world, the Summit was a significant step towards developing the global trade initiative that is necessary for doing effective business today, and expanding the focus of indigenous entrepreneurs globally.

For more information about the Summit and its outcomes, visit: http://wsie.wtuglobal.org./intro.php. •

The growing Aboriginal population represents an opportunity to increase Aboriginal participation in business opportunities. It is estimated that over 200,000 jobs will be needed across Western Canada within the next 15 years to meet workforce demands. This is an unprecedented opportunity to improve opportunities for Aboriginal peoples, and to increase economic productivity across the region.

The Government of
Canada and Western
Economic Diversification
Canada are committed to,
and involved in, working
with our indigenous peoples
to develop strong Aboriginal
economies, not only within
Canada, but throughout
the world.

# ACCESS

SASKATCHEWAN

January - March 2004

## **Creating Communities of Tomorrow**

by Heather Waldern-Hinds

Regina residents might not realize it, but their city is a living laboratory in the new five-year, \$30 million Communities of Tomorrow



partnership. The partnership and its key component, the National Research Council's \$10 million Centre for Sustainable Infrastructure Research (CSIR), were launched in May 2003.

Together, the National Research Council, University of Regina's (UofR) Centre for Sustainable Communities and City of Regina will develop, test and commercialize environmental and building infrastructure technologies to help communities be more sustainable.

Under the Centre for Sustainable Communities and Communities of Tomorrow partnership, 11 research projects are underway on issues such as water quality, air pollution, energy conservation, waste management and affordable housing. About 15 scientists will be hired at the CSIR, and UofR undergraduate and graduate students will participate in partnership research projects.

New technology developed by the partnership will help the city better manage environmental elements such as potable and waste

water. Regina and area firms participating in partnership projects will gain expertise they can offer to other municipalities.

Partnership members, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and Saskatchewan Industry and Resources, are each committing \$5 million over five years to the initiative. The city and university will match those contributions.

WD also provided \$400,000 to the initiative's development. The Regina Regional Economic Development Authority provides support and a link to local businesses.

For more information on the Communities of Tomorrow partnership, visit www.communitiesoftomorrow.ca, or call (306) 787-9317.\*

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## **Dollar Store Offers More For Your M**

by Regan Brady



The discount store's first year gross sales of \$1.2 million surpassed all expectations for the chain, becoming the first store in Canada to exceed six figures.

Liebreich attributes the store's success to its location, its loyal customers and the franchise itself.

"The customers come back every week to see what's new because it changes so quickly," she said.

Joyce Liebreich is an entrepreneur with more.

This may be the reason why after the Prince Albert resident opened **Your Dollar Store With More** in October 2001 she was breaking franchise records all over Canada.

"She [Joyce] has an entrepreneurial spirit, strong management skills and the desire to succeed," said Wayne Cameron, manager of **Prince Albert & District Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)**. "She's providing a valuable service to this community."

She also acknowledged that the store would not have been a reality without the help she received from the Prince Albert CFDC. "They were very supportive when we approached them for the first time. They said it was going to be a success," Liebreich added.

"It's a prime example of when somebody's getting started and the chartered banks wouldn't touch them. We were able to help," indicated Cameron. Because Liebreich required a substantial loan, Cameron enlisted the help of **Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (W.E.)** in Saskatoon.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

"It's a great example of a success story. We're quite proud that we were able to play a part in the financing required to launch this business," said Laura Small, executive director of W.E.

In June 2003, the Prince Albert CFDC honoured Liebreich with the Director's Choice Award for small business. And, in the spring, Your Dollar Store With More received the Prince Albert and District Chamber of Commerce's Samuel McLeod Award for job creation.

For more information on Your Dollar Store With More, call (306) 763-0202 or the Prince Albert & District CFDC at (306) 763-8125.

Saskatchewan's 13 Community Futures Development Corporations and Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. are members of Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) Western Canada Business Service Network. For more information on WD or its network partners, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit www.wd.gc.ca.



## INNOVATION

## **Enzymes and Proteins Meet Their Match**

by Cameron Zimmer

The University of Saskatchewan added a world-class research centre filled with high-powered lasers, X-rays and microscopes

when it opened the \$11.4 million Saskatchewan Structural Sciences Centre (SSSC) last September.

If this is sounding too scientific and you're starting to yawn, check out two SSSC researchers whose work is anything but boring.

Fighting Food Fraud — Food packaging is plastered with claims of 100 per cent natural and genuine ingredients. Dr. Nicholas Low is using SSSC equipment to find out if these labels are telling the truth.

Low believes he has discovered the equivalent of food fingerprints in enzyme groups called glycosidases. He can now search for additives' fingerprints to see if a product was altered. Exploring this fingerprint theory is only possible because of the SSSC's equipment and facilities, Low says.

But his enthusiasm doesn't end there. "The Structural Sciences Centre is more than just a building and equipment,"

Low said. "For me, this is the ultimate — the opportunity to use my expertise, along with others', to attack bigger

scientific issues."

Clingy Cells – Doctors and scientists know that during the early stages of heart attacks and in diseases such as coronary artery disease and cancer, cells clump together. Researchers are now trying to find a way to stop cells from binding.

Canada Research Chair Dr. Thomas Haas is studying proteins called integrins on the surface of blood cells, platelets and cancer cells that control their stickiness. His research could lead to the design of new

drugs for use in the prevention and treatment of diseases by blocking cells from binding.

"The Structural Sciences Centre is one of the reasons I chose to come to the University of Saskatchewan," Haas said. "Without the centre and its equipment, I wouldn't be able to do my research."



Maintaining Prosperity in Western Canada

by Jason Brisbois
Chief Economist, Headquarters, WD Edmonton

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the Conference Board of Canada released *Insights* on Western Canada: A Socio-economic Report.

The report compares Western Canada's performance in various categories with other selected jurisdictions that reflect comparable economic structures, including: the rest of Canada, eight states in the northwestern U.S., Australia and Finland. By comparing the region's performance in innovation, the environment, education and skills, health and society, the study provides an assessment of the overall quality of life enjoyed by western Canadians.

According to the report, the western Canadian economy has been operating close to its potential for the past 20 years, meaning that the economy has utilized the capital and labour available in the region to almost the maximum possible extent. But, if the economy is to maintain this level of performance in the future, certain issues must be addressed. The region's track record in innovation, involvement of Aboriginal people in the economy and urban migration must be improved in order to maintain and build upon our high quality of life.

The comparison showed, for example, that the West is a top performer in health, an average performer in economy, education and skills, and society, but a poor performer in both innovation and the environment. Because of the degree of prosperity enjoyed by the region over the past 20 years, it is difficult to create a

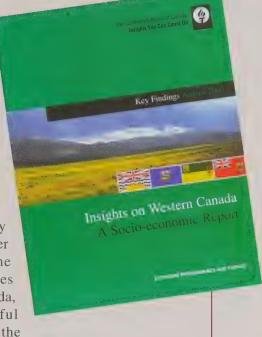
sense of urgency about addressing challenges to a prosperous future.

The report, funded by WD, provides a better understanding of the challenges and issues facing Western Canada, and provides useful analysis to support the

development of policies and the design of new programs that address western economic development needs and opportunities.

"This report confirms that Western Economic Diversification Canada's core program areas of innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable communities are on target for improving the quality of life for western Canadians," said WD Secretary of State Stephen Owen at the release of the study in August 2003.

For a copy of the report and its key findings, visit the Conference Board's website at: www.conferenceboard.ca.



## **BSE Surveillance is Priority One** in Alberta



In 2002, there were 5.310 million head of cattle, 187,000 head of sheep (Statistics Canada) and 60,970 head of domesticated deer and elk (AAFRD) in Alberta.

Whether we call it *Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy* (BSE) or "mad cow disease," we all know how a single case reported in May 2003 crippled Canada's beef industry. The effect was immediate and widespread. The beef industry lost up to \$11 million a day and is still struggling to recover.

Imagine the effects if Alberta didn't have a top surveillance program in place. The **Food Safety Division** of Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) has a world-class facility that performs scientifically-valid, internationally-credible animal health and food safety surveillance in support of market access for Alberta's agrifood industry.

BSE is a form of a progressive, degenerative, fatal disease of the brain known as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE). Alberta's surveillance program not only looks for BSE, but also *Chronic Wasting Disease* (CWD) in deer and elk, and *Scrapie* in sheep. It is believed that these diseases are caused by abnormal prion protein.

The Agri-Food Safety Branch (AFSB) of the Food Safety Division has had a BSE/CWD monitoring program in place since 1996, and conducted a Scrapie surveillance project in 2001-2002. They are continually enhancing surveillance for TSEs in Alberta livestock and wildlife, in collaboration with Sustainable Resource Development of Alberta and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, based on advances in science and technology.

In March 2001, the Canada/Alberta Western Economic Partnership Agreement provided funding assistance to continue and enhance Alberta TSEs surveillance. Western Economic Diversification Canada and AAFRD each provided \$195,000.

"The AFSB's ability to detect the single case of BSE is proof that Alberta's programs really work," commented Dr. Gerald Ollis, Alberta's chief provincial veterinarian. "The Edmonton laboratory is the only lab in the world that has correctly detected and confirmed field cases of BSE, CWD and Scrapie. The ability of the surveillance system to detect TSEs, despite their low prevalence, is reassuring for consumers."

This was evidenced by the tremendous support for the industry across the country. Consumers weren't afraid to fire up the barbeque to grill steaks and burgers, despite the response from other countries.

The Alberta government recently committed \$15 million toward increased operating costs and upgrading the lab facilities to allow, among other benefits, for testing of up to 25 times more cattle for BSE using rapid testing methods.

For more information about Alberta's surveillance programs, visit: www.agric.gov.ab.ca/surveillance.

## The Most Important Harvesting Advance Since the Combine

by Lee Gregg

We've come a long way since the 1830s when combines were pulled by horses. Today's machines come equipped with air conditioning, stereo systems and comfortable seating, although the actual process of combining has remained virtually the same – until now.

Bob McLeod, president of McLeod Harvest Inc., has devised an alternative technology to the combine that will revolutionize the grain harvesting system by increasing agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability.

Conventional combines reap, thresh and clean only the kernels. The McLeod Harvest System takes the chaff, screenings and weed seeds and turns them into a valuable second crop called millings – nutritious animal feed for livestock. For every 10 acres of grain harvested, there are enough millings to keep one cow fed over winter, at no extra cost.

Since 2001, 14 prototypes have been built and sold to prairie farmers. Company engineers work in the field with the farmers testing the equipment and designing improvements for the most optimal performance.

With funding assistance through Western Economic Diversification Canada's **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program**, McLeod hired engineering graduate Jean-Louis Gratton to coordinate research into the agronomic benefits of its system and aid in the development of components and processes for the equipment. With a Master of Science degree in biosystems engineering and a background in developing prototype agricultural equipment, Gratton was a natural fit.

"This is a very ambitious project. Our engineering personnel have to be at least as clever as the competition,"

said McLeod. "The First Jobs program helped us hire someone as well-skilled and educated as Jean-Louis, and train him to meet McLeod standards."

"It's worked out well for both of us in terms of objectives," added Gratton. "I've received a lot of training and it's exciting to be part of a project that will help farmers to be more productive."

McLeod's goal is to manufacture the world's premium harvesting equipment. With a system that harvests two crops instead of one, reduces herbicides and bailing costs, recovers and produces a cleaner crop, and is environmentally friendly – he's achieved just that.

For more information, contact McLeod Harvest at (204) 772-8650 or visit their website at: www.mcleodharvest.com.



## Forest Floors Provide a Garden of Opportunities

Sheltered beneath the forest canopy lies a garden that one might think is overlooked. In fact, the commercial harvest of non-timber forest products contributes approximately \$280 million in direct sales annually to the British Columbia economy.

"When developing local economies, you first look at your existing assets. The North Island region has an abundance of non-timber

forest products," said Cathy Denham, manager of the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Mount Waddington. "Our forests have tremendous potential to create a new stream of income for the region that, in turn, will lead to new employment opportunities."

Non-timber forest products include everything found in a forest, except the actual trees – wild mushrooms and berries, medicinal and pharmaceutical products, cedar oil, and floral greens such as ferns, mosses and cedar boughs.

With this in mind, the CFDC and Royal Roads University joined forces on a project with the potential to foster the development of new products and markets for the forestry-dependent economy of northern Vancouver Island. Together, they are preparing a business plan for a North Island Non-Timber Forest Products Innovation Centre, in consultation with First Nations and many others. The



Chanterell mushrooms, a fall variety, are currently selling for \$14.99 a pound at specialty food stores.

centre would help accelerate the economic development of the region by utilizing a portion of the forest resources currently unused.

While people may see picking mushrooms as a seasonal job at best, there are many opportunities for year-round employment for those who take the time and effort to build a business that

handles several products.

When the forest operations in Port McNeill closed down, everything shut down according to Graham MacDonald. After attending meetings about non-timber forest products, he began harvesting Salal, an evergreen plant with edible purple berries, off the logging roads in the area. Today, MacDonald also harvests Bracken Fern, Chanterelle mushrooms, pussy willows and blue and red huckleberries.

Funding for the Innovation Centre's business plan was provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada. Funding proposals that would make the Port McNeill centre a reality have been submitted to the Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative and the B.C. Coast Sustainability Trust Fund.

For more information about the Non-Timber Forest Products project, contact the CFDC of Mount Waddington at 1-877-956-2220.◆

## We All Need a Headstart in Life

by Jean Collins

Dr. Deborah Haines, co-founder of Saskatoon Colostrum Company (SCC), says she didn't set out to make some of the world's highest quality colostrum products — it just happened. Colostrum is the first milk produced by female mammals. It is special because of its high levels of disease-fighting antibodies.

In 1993, Haines and co-founder Brian Chelak were researching existing commercial colostrum products at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon. They found the products contained inadequate levels of the antibodies necessary to prevent disease in calves. In response to the market demand for a better quality product, they established SCC in November 1994.

Since then, SCC has launched several colostrum products for calves, dogs and cats. "Headstart<sup>TM</sup> is the top selling colostrum product in Canada and Japan," attests Haines. It accounts for about 70 per cent of the company's domestic and international sales. Sales of its nutritional supplement for pets, PETerna<sup>TM</sup>, are expanding — especially in the United States. They also export to Germany, Japan and Mexico, averaging a 30 per cent sales increase over the last five years.

In 2002, SCC hired University of Saskatchewan Animal Science graduate Pam Kish through Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP). Kish conducts animal trials for SCC's product development research. "She was key in doing the animal feeding trials supporting the development of one new product and in expanding the label on another," commented Haines.

Kish prefers the hands-on experience working with the animals, but she acknowledges the research experience she's gained through this opportunity. She has a new appreciation for the years of work necessary to bring a product to market. "It's not stuff they teach you in school," she noted.

While the exact method of processing the colostrum is a trade secret, Haines will admit their process involves milk collected from several dairy farms in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba. It is spray dried at a private plant in Alberta and packaged in Saskatchewan.

For more information about Saskatoon Colostrum's products, call 1-866-242-3185.

For additional information about the ITPP or other WD programs, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our website at: www.wd.gc.ca.



Parn Kish prefers the hands-on experience of working with animals, but is gaining valuable research experience.

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Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

## **Building a Gateway to Prosperity**

...Edmonton begins construction on the Prairie's first World Trade Centre

by Laura McNabb

Long known as the Gateway to the North, Edmonton stepped forward to become a portal for international business growth and development, as well as nation-wide innovation and entrepreneurship.

The historic Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) building on Jasper Avenue and 101st Street is being renovated to house World Trade Centre Edmonton, thanks in large part to funding from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the Government of Alberta. Each contributed \$3.5 million towards the refurbishment of the Edmonton landmark.

As part of a network of over 300 World

facility will act as host to international travelers, offering



Maureen McCaw joins Minister Anne McLellan and Edmonton-Glenora MLA Drew Hutton to kick off construction on the World Trade Centre in Edmonton.

services and access to some of the region's economic development and tourism agencies. The restored building will also be a key component in Edmonton's downtown revitalization strategy, bringing both businesses and visitors to the core.

"Commerce is an international language," said Health Minister Anne McLellan, on behalf of WD Secretary of State Stephen Owen. "Innovation and opportunity speak to people around the world, and it is essential that Canada's voice be heard. The establishment of a World Trade Centre is a triumph, both for the people of Edmonton and for many across the West."

The facility is slated to open its doors

Trade Centres operating around the world, Edmonton's | to businesses and international travelers in the spring of 2004.



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# ACCES WEST

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April - June 2004

## The Changing Climate of Our Environment

Greenhouse gases. Climate change. What are they and why are they so important?

Water vapour, ozone, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and halocarbons — without these naturally occurring "greenhouse" gases (GHGs) the sun's heat would escape and the earth's temperature would be too cold to support life. But, human activities have resulted in the release of significant quantities of GHGs that are adding to the warming effect of the natural atmospheric greenhouse.

The main contributor of these heat-trapping gases is carbon dioxide, especially through the burning of fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are used in every aspect of our lives – from powering cars, airplanes, trains and ships, to fuelling industrial manufacturing processes and providing heat, light, air conditioning and energy for homes and businesses. These activities are changing the atmosphere at a greater rate than humans have ever experienced.

In 2001, Canadians emitted GHGs equivalent to approximately 720 megatonnes of carbon dioxide alone into the atmosphere — that's over 6,100 times the weight of the CN Tower.

While Canada contributes only about two per cent of total global GHG emissions, we are one of the highest per capita emitters, largely the result of our resource-based economy, climate and size.

Globally speaking, climate change refers to changes in the climate of the earth and understanding its potential consequences – social, economic and environmental – is vital. Warming of the atmosphere could significantly alter the earth's climates and result in unstable weather conditions, violent and more frequent storms, hurricanes and floods, threats to food and water supplies, and more. Canada's agriculture, forestry and energy sectors could all be significantly affected.

Continued on page 2





## Access West

April - June 2004

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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#### Disponible aussi en français

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

## Taking Advantage of Opportunities in the West

Continued from cover

Climate change is already a growing concern in many western Canadian industry sectors. Warmer conditions alter forest growth and distribution patterns, and have been linked to the increased spread and frequency of forest fires and pest infestations. The implications for our everyday lives, including our health, the industries we rely on and our economy are enormous.



The Government of Canada is charting a path that will allow the economy to grow while reducing GHGs. This new direction means introducing initiatives that will pay longer-term dividends, such as the development of new, cleaner technologies. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is helping to facilitate this in the West.

NOV 0 2 2004

At WD, we believe that knowledge, innovation and collaboration are the foundation of economic prosperity. The Department is working with western Canadians to meet the Kyoto challenge by playing a central role in facilitating the development of innovative new environmental technologies that address climate change.

These technologies will not only help to lower costs and increase the competitiveness of western businesses, but also create jobs and international exporting opportunities.

WD initiated discussions in each of the four western provinces with business, academia, not-for-profits and government decision makers on how to develop and commercialize the environmental technology sector. Key opportunities for this promising sector were identified, and these ideas formed the agenda for the **Western Canadian Environmental Technology Forum** held in Vancouver in December 2003.

For more information, visit the federal climate change website at: www.climatechange.gc.ca, or the WD website for information about the forum: www.wd.gc.ca.

## Sustainable, Eco-Efficient, Economical

### ...PTAC Helps the Energy Industry and the Environment

by Heather Traub
PTAC Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada

Pump more oil! Produce more natural gas! Do it cheaper, faster and safer. And, while you're at it, reduce the environmental impact!

Hydrocarbon energy-producing companies have a tall order to fill. Oil and gas fields are maturing, while research and development dollars to maximize those resources are shrinking. At the same time, oil and gas producers are under pressure to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. New hydrocarbon energy technologies can help producers balance these multiple demands.

Headquartered in Calgary, PTAC Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada is a not-for-profit association created in 1996 to facilitate innovation, technology transfer and collaborative research and development in the pre-refinery oil and gas industry. Its objective is to improve the environmental, safety and financial performance of the industry and, as a result, act as a matchmaker for hydrocarbon energy technology providers and end users.

PTAC's technology for emissions reduction and ecoefficiency project is the brainchild of its hydrocarbon energy industry members who asked the association to expand its mandate to include sustainable, eco-efficient and economical greenhouse gas-reducing technologies.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) provided \$738,000 to PTAC in January 2003 to undertake a three-year project focused on encouraging the adoption of GHG-reducing technologies in the hydrocarbon energy industry.

WD funding enables PTAC to facilitate the search for new or improved technologies and best practices, and to help develop them through pilot testing if required.



PTAC's Technology Transfer Director Denis Gaudet (L) and President Eric Lloyd (R). WD's support for the TEREE project opened doors for PTAC and its hydrocarbon energy stakeholders to develop and implement GHG emission-reducing technologies.

Photo courtesy of PTAC.

Working with partners, stakeholders and supporters, the association will ensure hydrocarbon energy technology users, researchers and providers apply an integrated approach to developing and implementing new technologies.

Representatives from industry, government regulators and other organizations make up the project's steering committee. Committee members provide strategic direction for demonstration projects, working groups, workshops and other events to deliver project results.

Western Economic Diversification Canada's financial support for this project opens doors for PTAC and hydrocarbon energy stakeholders to develop and implement sustainable, eco-efficient and economical GHG reducing technologies.

For more information on PTAC's greenhouse gas and emissions reduction project, contact Denis Gaudet, Director of Technology Transfer, at (403) 218-7710 or visit www.ptac.org.

## **Environmenta Flipping the "On" Swit**

by Caroline Hickton

Canada has a tremendous opportunity to take knowledge from its resource-based history and apply it to a promising future. With a well-educated and dynamic workforce, excellent research and educational institutions, and citizens who welcome technological change, Canada has the potential to capitalize on the commercialization of environmental technologies.

To help put Western Canada on the path to realizing this potential, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) hosted the **Western Canadian Environmental Technology Forum** on December 5, 2003, at Vancouver's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The forum brought together more than 130 westerners from the private sector, First Nations bands, related researchers and government to discuss how to maximize opportunities in the environmental technology sector.

The forum included interactive breakout and plenary sessions, and questions and answers with government representatives. With a diverse agenda, several key themes surfaced throughout.

There was a consensus among forum delegates that there is a large potential for Canada to expand into international markets. In 2000, Canada exported more than \$1.6 billion in environmental technology, and the West was a large contributor to this success.

A few examples of Western Canada's growing expertise in environmental technologies include: the University of British Columbia's Clean Energy Research Centre, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's Fuel Cell and Interpretive Centre, the University of Manitoba's cuttingedge engineering research facilities, and the University of Regina's Greenhouse Gas Technology Centre.

Discussions on international markets developed into a dialogue about the importance of cost-effective environmental technologies. After environmental disasters, such as oil spills, governments pay large sums on clean-up and recovery. But, proactive investment in environmental technologies could save governments from such unexpected and expensive expenditures.

"We are beginning to see the importance of being cost effective and this could be a turning point in Western Canada," said forum co-chair John MacDonald, chairman and CEO of Day4 Energy.

Climate change is a serious global issue that deserves attention. Canadians have seen the effects of global warming with declining water levels in the Great Lakes, insect infestations in B.C.'s forests, and extreme weather events such as droughts on the Prairies, ice storms in eastern Canada and flooding in Manitoba and Quebec.

Finding solutions to global climate change requires collaborative discussions and commitment among citizens engaged worldwide. The forum stimulated collaborative planning to realize the potential of new environmental technologies through partnerships, both those existing and those cultivated at the forum.

"The Government of Canada will rely heavily on industry and academia as partners to do what is required for future success in the modern Canadian economy," said WD Deputy Minister and forum co-chair Oryssia Lennie.

# echnologies... to a Sustainable Future

It was evident at the forum that while the Government of Canada is supportive of efforts to carve a new niche for environmental technologies in Canada, these efforts cannot succeed without partnerships. As Lennie stated, "Western Economic Diversification Canada will work to continue this dialogue, but the future is in the hands of industry and academia."

At the end of the day, participants from Saskatchewan and B.C. described what they got out of the forum. It was clear to all that working together in a municipal, provincial or national manner is key to the future success of

environmental technologies in Canada. Participants recognized the Environmental Technologies Forum as a great push in the right direction — bringing individuals together to start forms of collaboration.

MacDonald said, "The forum today has exceeded my expectations. In my own case, I met a lot of people I didn't know and I heard a lot of things I didn't know. I think this is the beginning of a network and if we continue the momentum for Western Canada, we can build economic wealth around sustainable, cost-competitive environmental technologies."

Western Economic Diversification Canada will continue to partner to advance the goals and strategies initiated at



Over 130 people attended Western Canadian Environmental Technology Forum at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver.

the Western Canadian Environmental Technology Forum and to support the overall vision that recognizes environmental technologies as a vital component of sustainable economic development in the West, and in Canada.

For more information about environmental technologies, visit: www.wd.gc.ca/innovation.

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

# **Providing Tools that Work at the Grassroots Level**

by Jody Simonson Senior Business Officer, WD Edmonton

Business-to-business, town-by-town, there are 90 volunteer-based, non-profit organizations across Western Canada working to build stronger communities by creating local solutions to local challenges.

Funded largely by Western Economic Diversification Canada, Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) take a grassroots approach to the delivery

of programs and services that provide valuable expertise and opportunities in their communities.

The Pan West
C o m m u n i t y
Futures Network
was established in 1996
as an informal network
supporting Community
Futures (CF) offices to
address common issues.

Through collaborative efforts involving the four provincial CF associations, the Pan West Network helps to strengthen the profile of the Community Futures initiative and access additional resources for community economic development initiatives at the local and regional levels. Here are just a few of the network's accomplishments to date:

- Pan West website has evolved into a Pan Canadian website
- Developed CF Best Practices website initiative now national in scope
- Needs/gaps analysis of high-speed Internet capabilities in northern and remote communities

• Study on the impact of the Community Futures program across Western Canada

Of particular note is the Community Futures Board Development (CFBD) program, originally known as the Community Futures Achievement Program. The program was developed in response to a growing demand for a standardized orientation program to help Community Futures board members better understand their role in providing leadership to their local organizations.

In partnership with the Credit Union Institute of Canada, the network designed the CFBD tool to provide western Canadian CFDC offices with skills and knowledge needed to build strong, sustainable organizations. It has evolved into a

comprehensive training program that covers everything from board roles and responsibilities, to financial management, liability issues, leadership and community economic development. In fall 2003, three new modules were launched focusing on board accountability, credit and audit processes, and management recruitment and leadership. Each module is a valuable tool for anyone actively involved in volunteer board activities.

For further information about Community Futures program and services in your area, visit www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/index.html. For information about the CFBD program, contact: cfbd@telus.net.\*

# ACCESS

April - June 2004

**MANITOBA** 

# **Continuing a Tradition to Strengthen and Diversify Manitoba**

by Lee Gregg

December 1, 2003, saw the launch of a new Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), continuing a long tradition of the federal and provincial governments working together to benefit the province of Manitoba.

The \$50 million EPA, consisting of matching \$25 million contributions from the governments of Canada and Manitoba, will provide a mechanism for achieving greater federal-provincial cooperation and contributing to strengthening and expanding the economy.

The first economic development partnership agreement signed in 1998 saw \$40 million dollars invested in Manitoba. Projects funded under this agreement included: Smartpark, Urban Circle Training Centre, The Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature's Parkland/Mixed Woods Gallery, redevelopment of the City of

Selkirk's waterfront, Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium and Festival Park at The Forks.

The new four-year EPA will provide funding for programs and projects with a focus on two strategic priorities – building Manitoba's economy and encouraging sustainable communities. The EPA will be used to strengthen and diversify Manitoba's economy by building on existing economic strengths, enhancing the skills of Manitoba's workforce and promoting regional development.

Manitoba was the second of four western provinces to sign agreements with the federal government. The \$25 million federal allocation for Manitoba is part of a \$100 million Government of Canada investment in the West through the Western Economic Partnership Agreements.



The Parkland/Mixed Woods Gallery takes you on a journey across Manitoba's largest region and brings you a compelling story of the unimaginable richness of natural and cultural diversity as shown by this segment of a 27 metre diorama.

Photo courtesy of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature.

# **Challenging 200**

by Lee Gregg

According to Thomas Edison, "to invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk." Today's inventors still need imagination and junk, but they also need business savvy, perseverance and patience. Product development,

market research, market testing, contract manufacturing, patenting . . . at times it can be overwhelming.

Phil Poetker, president of Phil Poetker Designs, knows first hand how overwhelming it can be. A successful inventor, Poetker has used the services of the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre for over 10 years to help wade through the myriad of pitfalls awaiting entrepreneurs. "The Centre helps me in many ways," he noted. "The library resources are second to none. The information is always current and the library staff are not only very knowledgeable, but understanding personable - an intangible

The process of taking an idea and turning it into a commercially viable product is a complicated and challenging endeavor. Poetker works closely with today's inventors to turn

that you notice when it's

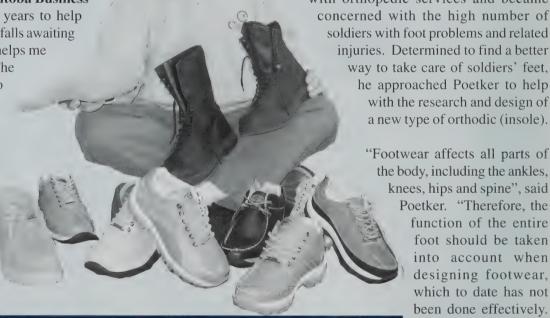
not there."

their dreams into economic reality by providing consulting services, from the pre-conceptual stage through prototyping, focus groups, manufacturing, marketing and sales.

> But it's his current project that will appeal to anyone who has suffered from flat feet, high arches, heel, knee, hip and back pain or just tired, sore feet.

Poetker has partnered with podiatrist Dr. Lorne Canvin of Canvin and Sons Footwear. Dr. Canvin provides the military with orthopedic services and became concerned with the high number of soldiers with foot problems and related injuries. Determined to find a better way to take care of soldiers' feet, he approached Poetker to help with the research and design of a new type of orthodic (insole).

> the body, including the ankles, knees, hips and spine", said Poetker. "Therefore, the function of the entire foot should be taken into account when designing footwear, which to date has not been done effectively. Our Bio-insole was designed to take into account how a body



Phil Poetker with footwear that has been manufactured with the patented Bio-insole (holding). "I want to break through the barrier that says you can't have good fashion without discomfort."

### ears of Tradition

moves, where the pressure falls on the feet and how this influences the rest of the body."

The patented Bio-insole is <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" thick and has superior shock absorbing qualities in the heel, the arch and the ball of the foot. Early prototypes showed that such a substantial insole would not fit in existing footwear and still leave room for the feet. It was determined that the entire shoe would have to be redesigned around the insole.

Finding a manufacturer to work with them on their new design proved difficult. For 200 years no one has challenged how shoes were made. Poetker had to deal with a great deal of skepticism from an industry that wanted to build the shoe their way.

Patience and perseverance paid off. There are 60 new designs of men's and women's footwear including military and work boots, cross trainers, casual dress shoes and sandals. The sandals will be of great interest to women as they have been designed to allow you to change the straps (uppers). With one outsole, you can have any number of different colour uppers to accessorize with instead of buying several pairs. "We intend to show that you don't have to give up fashion for comfort," Poetker states with pride. "In fact, Canvin shoes are where fashion and comfort meet."

What started as a project to help Canadian soldiers, and provide a significant cost savings to the military, has expanded to provide consumers with a line of high-quality footwear that is functional and fashionable. Edison would be pleased.

For information on the services offered by Phil Poetker Designs or Canvin Footwear, call (204) 955-1234.

The Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network and is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For information call 1-800-665-2019 or visit their website at: www.cbsc.org/manitoba.



Sample of products brought to market by Phil Poetker Designs: The Skate Keeper with the D-grip Handle and the Canvin sandle with changeable uppers.

Photo courtesy of Phil Poetker

### Don't Get E

by Lee Gregg



Entrepreneurial activity is generally associated with being creative, innovative and identifying opportunities within the economic system. However, when relegated to the role of managing a company, most small business owners are no longer considered entrepreneurial. And yet, after almost five years as president of **MAD Creations, Inc.**, Michelle Yates is just that.

MAD Creations is a design house, focusing on specialty design and illustration projects for the restaurant and hospitality industry. Yates provides creative art solutions for merchandising and menu display boards that are artistically unique and highly functional.

"I started MAD Creations from my basement," recalled Yates. "I had 60 images and I painted my little heart out." Yates turned to the Western Economic Diversification Canada-sponsored Assiniboine Credit Union Micro Loan Program and the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba for financial assistance, and was able to move out of the basement and hire her first employee after one year.

"The Assiniboine Credit Union believed in me and my business concept when there were no tangibles to measure success on," noted Yates. "I keep a very close relationship with them and they offer guidance and financial support on a regular basis. And the Women's Enterprise Centre was a huge break for me. They believed in me and I consider them partners, as I may not be where I am today if they hadn't come through for me."

MAD Creations was launched with the same dramatic flair Yates uses for her creative illustrations. She chose to test her new products and designs at the largest restaurant show in North America – the National Restaurant Association Trade Show in Chicago. "This was my make or break test," she said. Not only did she make it, her designs were voted best new product at the event.

To those familiar with Yates' creative work, the best of show award will come as no surprise. By blending the vivid colours and playful graphics of her designs with interesting shapes, she creates signage that is eye-catching and stylish.

Within her second year of business, Yates realized that she could easily expand her U.S. sales, but would need additional staff. She once again turned to Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) for help, but this time through



## n, Get MAD!

the International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP), a program that provides salary assistance when hiring a recent graduate. "The ITPP is an awesome program," said Yates enthusiastically. "It helped me the most and I can't say enough great things about it."

The graduate was responsible for sourcing and acquiring U.S. distributors. The result, MAD Creations now exports 80 per cent of their products to the U.S. Previously, the company exported about 55 per cent of its products to

the U.S. Yates has negotiated accounts with such heavyweights as Kraft Food, Heinz North America, Disney Corporation, Sara Lee, Nestle, Canad Inns and in Las Vegas, with Caesars Palace, MGM Grand and The Bellagio.

Yates' entrepreneurial flair and business acumen are still in high drive. She has diversified into design solutions for packaging, restaurant décor and corporate identity packages, increasing the company's sales by over 300 per cent from the previous year. It is

no wonder that Yates was honoured with both the 2003 Women Entrepreneur of the Year for International Trade award and the Overall Excellence award, handed out annually by the Women Business Owners of Manitoba.

Yates has successfully blended the roles of entrepreneur and business manager as she continues to create innovative new products and increase MAD Creations' market share under her direction.

For more information about MAD Creations' products and services, call 1-877-520-3601 or visit their website at: www.makingartwork.com.

The Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network and is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For information Available in various sizes for tabletop, countertop or wall hanging applications, MAD Creations will customize their products to include any company logo.

Product photos are courtesy of MAD Creations.

Simply

MAD

About

Signs

call 1-800-203-2343 or visit their website at: www.wecm.ca.

WD and Assiniboine Credit Union jointly offer the Assiniboine Credit Union Micro Loan Program to provide better access to financing for small and start-up businesses in Winnipeg. For additional information, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit www.wd.gc.ca.



The only company in North America to use interesting shapes for their marker boards, MAD Creations continues to stay ahead of the competition with its innovative designs and colourful graphics.

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

### **Escape From**

by Lee Gregg



By combining the best of business leadership with volunteerism, entrepreneurs continue to make a positive impact with their community involvement. Portage la Prairie's Wendy Peters is one such entrepreneur.

Owner of **The Grindstone Coffee Co. and Giftwerks**, Peters has opened the doors of her business to the town's artistic community. From printing tickets to staging events that introduce artists to the public, she feels strongly about supporting local artists and providing them with a forum to promote their music, art, dance and literature.

Peters' gift for creating a community meeting place is evident as soon as you enter The Grindstone. The walls of her restaurant are adorned with the works of local artists and mingle with the smells of home-cooked soup, baked bread and enough delicious deserts to satisfy any sweet tooth.

"I'm not really a business person," Peters commented. "I see my business as an extension of my home and wher people walk in I want them to feel at home, to be comfortable."

A native Winnipegger, Peters moved to Portage la Prairie in 1998 when her husband joined the family real estate business Interested in running her own company, she converted 100 square feet of unused space adjacent to the family business into her first gift shop. Early success convinced her to take her dream of opening a coffee house and make it a reality.

Peters turned to the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba and Heartland Community Future Development Corporation (CFDC) for financial assistance. "It was a very positive experience," noted Peters "I had a steep learning curve and the counsellors at the Women's Enterprise Centre were very helpful and encouraging. I would have dropped the project entirely without them. And the CFDC was great. The counsellors were very supportive and were there when I needed them. appreciated that they were flexible enough to let me run the business the way I wanted."

Located on the town's main street next to City Hall, Peters developed a 50-seat coffee house that delivers fresh food quickly, while creating a warm and inviting atmosphere With 3,000 square feet to work with, she had enough space to include her charming gift shop and a children's play centre — a welcome addition to parents with small children

The additional floor space also provides room to host book signings, parties and musical concerts. Not only a



#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

# e Daily Grind

restaurateur, Peters also teaches music and holds recitals in the Grindstone the relaxed atmosphere provides her students and the town's Junior Musical Club with a competitive-free place to perform.

The Grindstone's live musical weekends include an "open mike" featuring Grindstone staff, as well as special events such as the medieval renaissance night. Sleigh rides through the Island of Lights Christmas light show is a favorite, and when patrons return to The Grindstone, they are entertained by a local writer reading Christmas stories. The evening is rounded out with hot chocolate, music and singing in the comforts of the coffee house.

Peters has shown her commitment and dedication in the giving of time, skills and enthusiasm to the benefit of her community. This mutually

beneficial relationship between the arts and business provides emerging talent with a warm and inviting atmosphere to practice their craft, while enhancing the company's position in the market. It is time well spent.

For information on The Grindstone Coffee Co. and Giftwerks. call (204) 856-2468 or visit their website at: www.giftwerks.ca.



Wendy Peters and a few of the appetizing deserts available at the Grindstone Coffee Co.

The Women's Enterprise Centre and Heartland Community Future Development Corporation are members of the Western Canada Business Service Network and are financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada For more information, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit www.wd.gc.ca. •

# The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg

by Lee Gregg

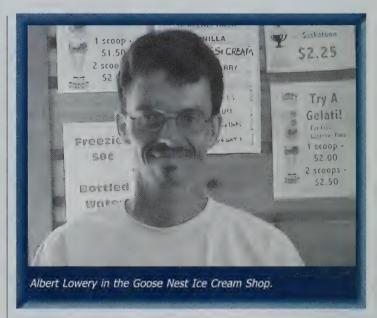
Travelling along Manitoba Highway #6 it would be difficult to miss Lundar's 18-foot Canada goose. Equally difficult to miss is the community's newest seasonal entrepreneurial business, the **Goose Nest Ice Cream Shop**.

Nestled beside this giant Canada goose is Albert Lowery's hard won dream. An entrepreneur at heart, Lowery always wanted to operate an ice cream shop, but wasn't sure where to begin. A client of Interlake Employment Services (IES), he worked with employment coordinator Karen Lindal to develop the entrepreneurial skills needed to run his business.

Lowery's skill development began by enrolling in the Entrepreneurship Workshop delivered by **Super Six Community Futures Development Corporation** (**CFDC**). The six-week workshop assessed Lowery's entrepreneurial strengths by identifying skills, education, employment history and personal interests. Included in the training was the opportunity to develop his business plan.

Deb Falk, Self-Employment Program Coordinator for Super Six, worked closely with Lowery and Lindal to assist in fine-tuning the business plan, identifying and putting in place additional support systems, and applying for funding under the CFDC's **Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Investment Program**. The program supports persons with disabilities to start, own and manage their own business.

"The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Investment Program loan was used for my start-up costs," said Lowery. "This included inventory and refrigeration equipment. Without the CFDC and IES support, I would not have been able to start my own business."



Ice cream is a seasonal business and Lowery spent the winter months preparing for the 2004 season, including establishing a presence on the community website and improving his financial management skills by taking math courses. Other plans include new flooring, air conditioning, and, best of all, a larger selection of ice cream and ice cream novelties.

With the support of his community and a determination to succeed, Lowery has given ice cream lovers another reason to look forward to summer.

Super Six CFDC is a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network and is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For more information about its programs and services, call 1-888-496-8932 or visit their website at: www.supersix.mb.ca.

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

# Working Together to Compete in the Global Tourism Industry

by Marcus Miller

SARS, mad cow disease, forest fires, the slowing of the U.S. economy, uncertainties about security — these and other challenges have all contributed to a weakened tourism industry in the West.

In response to these challenges and a corresponding 5-10 per cent decrease in international visitors, the **Tourism Alliance for Western Canada Inc.** has developed a marketing campaign to offset the downturn in tourism revenues, revitalize the industry and improve western competitiveness internationally.

The Tourism Alliance — consisting of industry associations in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba — are pooling their energies and resources to develop a targeted regional campaign to highlight the tremendous tourism opportunities available.

Overall, the tourism recovery strategy will promote the West as a safe and affordable travel destination that offers a variety of interesting experiences. For U.S. travellers, it will highlight that they needn't travel overseas in order to have an enjoyable holiday, and will capitalize on changing U.S. travel patterns, such as the recent preference for shorter getaways that are closer to home.

The campaign's pan-western component will focus on attracting tourists interested in visiting any of the western provinces, whereas four targeted components will focus on those most likely to visit a specific western location.

B.C. and Alberta will concentrate largely on priority U.S. markets, such as Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles, in addition to Asia/Pacific markets like Japan, Australia and Taiwan. Manitoba will focus on the U.S. Midwest, Europe and Asia/Pacific markets. And, highlighting

Saskatchewan as an "intimate" and "natural" destination, the provincial association will concentrate on attracting Americans from states such as North Dakota and Montana, in addition to overseas visitors from the U.K., Germany and Japan.

The campaign began in fall 2003 and will continue to the end of March 2005. The Tourism Alliance will also investigate partnerships with the Canadian Tourism Commission and the private sector during the campaign to secure more funding.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) provided \$5 million in support of this campaign; the four western provincial governments have also provided a total of \$5 million. WD has also supported past Tourism Alliance programs that yielded an economic benefit of \$110 million, primarily to small and medium-sized businesses in the West. \*

# Cellex Fuel Cell Demonstration Project a Success



The Cellex Power Unit powering a forklift.

Photo courtesy of Cellex Power Products.

Forklifts and other industrial vehicles used in thousands of warehouses and industrial sites could be the earliest adopters of fuel cell technology after a series of successful test trials by Richmond-based Cellex Power Products, Inc.

Fuel cells generate electricity by reacting hydrogen with oxygen in a

simple electrochemical cell. This efficient reaction occurs at low temperatures, making it a unique way to produce power. Its only by-products are heat, water and electricity.

Cellex is taking advantage of these unique characteristics to provide new functionality to conventional industrial vehicles — extended range, improved performance and clean and quiet operation.

The company recently completed trials of its fuel cell power units across Canada and the U.S. The power units provide improved lift truck performance, including indoor refuelling and compliance with all safety codes and regulations. They are designed to replace industrial lead acid battery and charger systems and deliver enhanced power to customers who operate large fleets of lift trucks in distribution centres. Lead acid batteries typically last only four to eight hours, requiring recharging two to three times a day — resulting in lost productivity and increased operational costs. The Cellex zero emission fuel cell solution addresses this problem by running longer and refueling faster.

Company President and CEO Chris Reid commented, "It was support from organizations such as Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), the Industrial Research Assistance Program and the National Research Council that gave us our start. We are grateful for their vision and support as Cellex continues to grow and develop."

The successful trials are an excellent example of groundbreaking product deployment that is being made possible through partnerships between WD, industry and Fuel Cells Canada (FCC).

Cellex is an active member and sponsor of Fuel Cells Canada, a non-profit, national industry association whose mission is to accelerate Canada's world-leading fuel cell and hydrogen industry. FCC is pleased to continue working with Western Economic Diversification Canada to forward the innovative work of its members through product demonstrations and project facilitation

For more information about Cellex Power Products, call (604) 270-4300 or visit their website at: www.cellexpower.com. For more information about Fuel Cells Canada, call (604) 822-9178 or visit www.fuelcellscanada.ca.



# The 'Maytag' of the **Environmental Clean-Up** Industry

by Jean Collins

Simple. Simple. That's the premise Regina's **Ground Effects Environmental Services Inc. (GEE)** applies to every design of its ground, water and air remediation or purification systems.

Sean Frisky created his first remediation system while working at the Regina Federated Co-op refinery. Frustrated with his environmental engineering work at the plant because the existing technology wasn't working, he thought he could come up with something better. Frisky approached his supervisor with a plan to design and build a more efficient system to clean-up contaminants on site. Today GEE is the exclusive remediation service provider to Federated Co-op across Western Canada.

With the success of his first system, Frisky set out to design and manufacture others.

GEE custom designs and manufactures environmental systems to clean-up ground contamination at gas stations, refineries or oil patch sites. This equipment uses a variety of methods to remove the contaminants at the source rather than digging up the soil and transferring the problem elsewhere. Because the equipment has up to 300 per cent fewer moving parts than the competition, it results in fewer breakdowns and faster site cleanup.

"We try to be the *Maytag* of the industry," asserts Frisky.

Sales at GEE are increasing exponentially — from \$80,000 in 1998 to \$4 million in 2003. Along with the sales growth, there has been an increase in staff to 19, up from only six in 2002.



Photo courtesy of Greg Huszar Photography.

One of those staff is Justin Lee who was hired through Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) First Jobs Science and Technology Program. The program provides up to 50 per cent of a recent post-secondary graduate's salary for up to one year.

"The learning curve (at GEE) is straight up," says Lee.

Frisky is quick to note the value of Lee's work at all stages of a project — from design and manufacturing, to installation. Being able to incorporate feedback from one design into the next improves performance and "impresses the client," says Frisky.

For more information about Ground Effects Environmental Services' products, call (306) 352-1400 or visit: www.groundeffects.org.

For additional information about the First Jobs program, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our website at: www.wd.gc.ca.

# Eco-Efficiency – No Problem for the Experts



Refineries and natural gas processing plants are familiar sights in Alberta. Unfortunately, they have a downside — sulphur dioxide emissions that cause acid rain and affect our environment.

Federal legislation requires sulphur content in gasoline be reduced by 90 per cent by 2005, and the Alberta government is pushing to eliminate sulphur flaring from sour gas wells.

According to John Sames, Calgary-based **Sulphur Experts Inc.** is a "sulphur plant trouble-shooting and pollution busting" company when it comes to gas plants and refineries.

To keep up with the demand for their services, the company approached Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). With assistance from WD's First Jobs in Science and Technology Program, the company hired two recent graduates from the University of Saskatchewan.

"Our focus was to hire younger blood and train them," commented Sames, president of Sulphur Experts. "You take a gamble when you hire someone not proven in the field, but it has paid off for us. And, without the First Jobs program we would have hired only one engineer – instead we hired two."

Chemical engineering graduate Eugene Bast and mechanical engineering grad Chris Jaggard were hired to assist with a collaborative Eco-Efficiency program with CETAC-West, a not-for-profit corporation committed to helping small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in the development and commercialization of new environmental technologies.

It makes perfect sense that these experts take the lead in developing a benchmarking and modeling initiative within the energy and greenhouse gas control sectors. Through the Eco-Efficiency program, Sulphur Experts and its sister company, Amine Experts, visit oil and gas plants to audit their use of energy. By optimizing energy efficiency, savings are created. Less fuel is used, producing fewer emissions. It's a win-win for both the oil and gas sector and the environment.

Sames indicated that the company has already audited six Alberta plants in the last eight months, but they are not limited by the provincial border. The company has taken its business globally, and 65 per cent of its work is now outside Canada.

For more information about Sulphur Experts and Amine Experts, call (403) 215-8400 or visit their website at: www.sulphurexperts.com.

For information about the First Jobs program, visit WD's website at: www.wd.gc.ca. •

Photo courtesy of Sulphur Experts Inc.

# Tapping the Earth for Energy Savings

by Lee Gregg

In late 2001, Wheat Belt Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) thought to create Manitoba's first geothermal housing subdivision. An environmentally-friendly technology, geothermal energy uses ground source heat pumps to tap into the earth's energy to heat and cool buildings.

Discussions between Manitoba Hydro's geothermal and heat pump specialists and Wheat Belt CFDC convinced them to partner on this project. The Village of Wawanesa and the Wawanesa/Oakland Community Development Corporation were eager to participate, as they believed it would create social, environmental and economic development opportunities for their community.

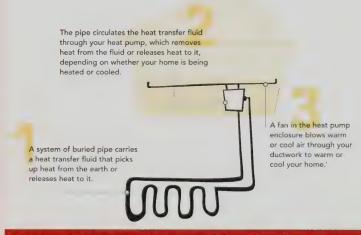
With a commitment to the environment and sustainable communities, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) was very enthusiastic about joining the project team. The Department also provided \$196,000 to assist with the underground piping installation costs.

How does geothermal energy work? Below the frost line the earth's temperature remains fairly constant. In summer, the soil temperature is cooler than the outside air. In winter, it's warmer. Similar to an air conditioner, a ground source heat pump takes heat from inside a building and pumps it outside. But a heat pump can be reversed to take heat from a heat source outside and pump it inside. Geothermal technology uses the earth's constant temperature to heat and cool buildings 300 per cent more efficiently than traditional methods.

"The project goal was to create an environmentallyfriendly subdivision that would create an impact for the entire surrounding region," noted Russ Danielson, Wheat Belt economic development officer. "This project has been a greater success than we ever thought possible and all the partners are extremely pleased with the results."

As project manager, Wheat Belt CFDC put together the dynamic team responsible for developing a geothermal housing subdivision and raising awareness of this sustainable energy source. For information on this and other upcoming geothermal projects, visit the Wheat Belt CFDC website at: www.wheatbelt.mb.ca, or call 1-888-347-4342.

Community Futures Development Corporations are members of the Western Canada Business Service Network and are financially supported by WD. For a complete listing of CFDC offices, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit www.wd.gc.ca.



Geothermal heat pump systems generally have these three components. For additional information, visit Manitoba Hydro's website at: www.hydro.mb.ca.

Photo courtesy of Manitoba Hydro.

If undeliverable please return to:

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## It Pays to Think Beyond the Box

Combine the talents of a western Canadian women's | business network, an innovative online business training | a virtual trade show and peer-to-peer forums facilitated

facility and a groundbreaking Internet conference, and you have the makings of

success.

On behalf of the Women's Enterprise Initiative, Sharon Hughes-Geekie, executive director of the Women's Enterprise Society of B.C., accepted a prestigious award for Internet innovation at the Canadian E-Business Leadership Awards. The awards — simulcast live in Toronto and Vancouver in October 2003 — paid tribute to Canadian organizations that demonstrate leadership and success in promoting electronic commerce, e-learning and business over the Internet.

Business Beyond the Box was a three-day networking and e-learning conference held in May 2003 for women entrepreneurs in Canada. From the comfort of their homes or workplaces, the conference brought together businesspeople from cities and communities across the country via the Web. Participants took part in strategic planning workshops, industry-specific breakout sessions, by business analysts.

> The network of Women's Enterprise Initiative offices from across the West collaborated with the Royal Roads business school in Victoria to deliver the virtual, interactive conference. During the conference, the Business Beyond the Box initiatives were given a permanent home with the launch of the Western Canada Training Centre at www.bbtb.ca — an online e-learning facility that meets the needs of busy entrepreneurs. It is flexible and can accommodate individual learning styles.

> Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) extends its congratulations to the Women's Enterprise Initiative, a non-profit

program funded by WD that promotes entrepreneurship in Western Canada by assisting women in starting and growing businesses.



1-888-338-WEST

www.wd.gc.ca

# ACCES WEST

CAI WE - AI8 WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

July - September 2004

# First Nations ... An Untapped Labour Force in Western Canada

Aboriginal Canadians have not fully shared in Canada's good fortune, but that is changing.

According to the September 2003 report by the Canada West Foundation, Achieving Potential: Towards Improved Labour Market Outcomes for Aboriginal People, Western Canada possesses an under-appreciated opportunity to deal with this potential challenge. The West is home to 62.1 per cent of Canada's Aboriginal population—the largest untapped labour force in Canada.

Analysts, industry and the Offices of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions have all come to the same conclusion: an aging population, declining birth rates and a culture that celebrates early retirement means a Canadian labour crisis within the next 10 years is imminent.

While skills development and education will help Aboriginal peoples participate more fully in the workforce, many western Canadian Aboriginal entrepreneurs are creating their own opportunities by starting and running successful businesses in almost every industry sector. These included logging, non-timber forest products, fashion design, computer programming, graphic design and fisheries, to name just a few.

These successful entrepreneurs are demonstrating to their families and their communities that participating in Western Canada's economy is available for all Aboriginal people.

The Government of Canada is committed to creating real economic opportunities for Aboriginal individuals and communities. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has assisted with various initiatives that are opening up opportunities for First Nations to fully participate in the workforce in Western Canada.

Continued on next page





#### Access West

July - September 2004

Access West is published quarterly by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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#### Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# WD Partners to Create Opportunities for Aboriginals

Continued from cover

Through WD-assisted programs like the distance learning initiative at the Grande Prairie Regional College, learning sites in remote northern Alberta Aboriginal communities offer students an opportunity to receive industry-specific training in their home communities. In B.C., many First Nations coastal communities are diversifying their economies away from the salmon fisheries with the help of federal support.

The Department is also building partnerships with major urban centres — Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg – to develop practical solutions that recognize the opportunities and challenges they face with the growing Aboriginal populations in their communities.

And, through a network of over 100 partners across the West, Western Economic Diversification Canada is helping Aboriginal entrepreneurs find success in the business community.

Ensuring that our First Nations individuals and communities are able to enjoy real economic opportunities, means a stronger West. And, a stronger West means a stronger Canada.

Canada West Foundation's series of research studies, *Building the New West*, including the report noted, has been funded in part by Western Economic Diversification Canada. Visit www.cwf.ca for online copies of these studies. •



# Resources for Aboriginal Entrepreneurs

Anyone wanting to make the jump to entrepreneurship needs a place to start. Aboriginal entrepreneurs need information and resources tailored to meet their unique challenges.

What unique challenges you ask? Shannon Armitage, Aboriginal Business Service Network Coordinator at The Business Link Business Service Centre in Edmonton, commented that many Canadians feel Aboriginal people don't know *how* to be good businesspeople. He added, "This attitude is changing. I am just one of many business services officers across the West that are helping Aboriginal people develop their business skills. And, I share their success stories with other business people and entrepreneurs who are considering small business as a career option."

Through Western Economic Diversification Canada's network partners across the West, services have been specifically designed for Aboriginal entrepreneurs to address these challenges.

Canada Business Services Centres (CBSCs) are a valuable resource for the budding Aboriginal entrepreneur.

Aboriginal Business Service Network offices can be found in CBSCs in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They are helping to increase the number, size and market reach of Aboriginal businesses by directing entrepreneurs to the information and resources they need, and increasing their ability to access capital and establish and grow their businesses. Alberta and Saskatchewan Web sites include interesting Aboriginal entrepreneur success stories.

In B.C., the Canada/B.C. Business Service Society launched www.firstbusiness.ca in November 2003, recognizing the diverse circumstances and needs of Aboriginal peoples in the province. The Web site was

designed to provide relevant information for adults and youth in both urban and rural areas that will help them start and run a successful business.

There are also 90 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) that are committed to providing business advisory services and creating new opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in rural communities across the West. Some of these offices are fully operated by Aboriginal people and located in Aboriginal communities. Since April 1999, western CFDCs have approved 860 loans totaling \$17.1 million to Aboriginal entrepreneurs, creating or maintaining 1,574 jobs.

For information about the resources nearest you, visit: www.wd.gc.ca/pos/default\_e.asp.\*

#### Other Valuable Resources for Aboriginal Entrepreneurs

#### Aboriginal Business Canada --

http://www.ic.gc.c

Aboriginal Business Development Fund -Apeetogosan (Metis) Development Inc. —

vAvv.oocka/en/i\_am/aborishnal\_entreprendtr/ ahulugic\_alllancas/Jetruit film

#### Aboriginal Canada Portal —

http://www.initiation.com/

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business -Western Region ---

www.rab--abarron

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

# **Strengthening Commu**

Our communities, our towns, our cities are key to our social goal can attract the best talent and compete for investment as vibrant

Investing in community sustainability has long been a priority for Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). The sustainability of our communities cannot be addressed through prosperity alone. Many factors affect their ability to access and take advantage of opportunities for enduring growth. Effective partnerships between WD, other federal government departments, the four western provincial governments, municipalities, educational institutions, industry and other stakeholders are building a future that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

WD investments help to renew physical infrastructure in western Canadian communities to protect the environment and support long-term economic growth through the Infrastructure Canada Program, a cost-shared program with provincial and municipal governments.

The Department helps identify new economic opportunities for communities facing setbacks. In the past, WD has helped to mitigate the impact of the military base closure in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan; helped get flood victims back on their feet following the Red River flood in Manitoba; and developed programs to assist communities find alternative economic opportunities following the downturn in the salmon fisheries along the B.C. coast.

WD is delivering federal assistance in the West to support economic development and diversification in forest-dependent communities impacted by the softwood lumber trade dispute through the **Softwood Industry and Community Economic Adjustment Initiative** (SICEAI). The program helps communities to create opportunities and transition away from

traditional forest-based dependency. The initiative supports local ideas and solutions that bring new sustainable economic growth with tangible benefits, such as jobs, to the local economy.

In fall 2003, WD and the four western provinces signed new Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPAs). These joint federal/provincial initiatives are aimed at fostering increased economic activity and improving the quality of life in communities across the West. WD is providing \$25 million in funding to each western province. With matching provincial contributions, each WEPA will invest up to \$50 million to help create a better environment for growth, business development and innovation.

Urban Development Agreements are innovative agreements that enable WD to develop partnerships among federal, provincial and municipal governments that better coordinate economic and social activities to address complex issues in urban areas, especially in inner-city areas.

The Winnipeg Development Agreement (WDA), a \$75 million cost-shared agreement between the federal government (through WD), the



comprises a hist

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

### ies in Western Canada

economic competitiveness...Canada depends on communities that fcommerce, learning and culture.



Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg, expired in September 2001. A new agreement is currently being negotiated among all three levels of government.

Signed in March 2000, the Vancouver Agreement has helped to lay the foundation for economic growth by improving conditions for business and employment, as well as quality of life, for residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The Province of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver and WD each contributed \$7 million over three years towards a variety of projects. Many initiatives engage the residents in projects that provide them with life skills and instill a sense of pride in their community.

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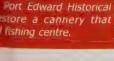
The five-year, \$20 million Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement was announced in October 2002. This agreement provides opportunities for northerners to improve regional economic infrastructure, employment prospects through training and practical skill experience, educational and business expertise, research and industry innovation, and business investment in the region. The

agreement is cost-shared equally by the governments of Canada (through WD) and Saskatchewan.

WD is a leader in the West, working with provincial governments and the cities of Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg on pilot projects that test new ideas on how to better respond to the local needs of Aboriginal peoples. The Urban Aboriginal Strategy Pilot Projects bring together government, local Aboriginal organizations, nongovernment organizations and the private sector to develop innovative solutions to address local priorities.

And finally, WD also supports Community Futures Development Corporations and Francophone Economic Development Organizations across the West. These non-profit, volunteer-led organizations offer technical and advisory services, as well as loans, to small businesses in their area. They also work to build stronger communities by creating local solutions to local challenges, new opportunity, new hope and new prosperity town-by-town and business-by-business. The francophone organizations also enhance the vitality of minority language communities in Western Canada.

For more information about the numerous ways WD is helping to create sustainable communities in the West, visit: www.wd.gc.ca/ced/default.asp. •



### Innovation is a Collaborat

by Jacob Berkowitz

What do the Tar Monster in the movie *Scooby Doo II*, the world's fastest digital information transfer and storage system, and a unique mobile emergency communications vehicle all have in common?

They're all western Canadian innovations supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP).

By working together, WD and the NRC are promoting prosperity in Western Canada through technological innovation. NRC-IRAP works closely with all kinds of small and medium-sized enterprises, helping them grow their businesses, increase their competitiveness and enhance their impact in the marketplace.

Here are just three examples that demonstrate the range and success of this collaboration.

#### Animation Software Creates a Splash

When the Tar Monster slimed its way onto movie screens across North America in March 2004, the audience at Winnipeg's Towne Eight theatre cheered and clapped. Not for the evil viscous blob in *Scooby Doo II*, but for its creators – Winnipeg's **Frantic Films**.

Developed with support from NRC-IRAP and WD, Flood is the company's unique, in-house software program that has rapidly emerged as one of the world's leading tools for simulating fluids.

"In the bigger film market, success for an animation studio is all about uniqueness and what you can bring to the table that's different than everyone else," says Ken Zorniak, Frantic's chief operating officer and senior visual effects producer.

The Flood software simulates the motions of liquids by applying the physics of fluid dynamics. Rather than trying to painstakingly animate a complex fluid motion, the software does the bulk of the work.

While Flood is making a splash in the animation industry, Frantic is now looking at other applications in industries that require visualizing fluids, from building ship hulls to medical procedures.

#### Double Data — Anywhere

Wayne Karpoff knows his company's data storage and transfer technology doesn't break the speed of light, but for users it appears to be that fast.

Edmonton-based **Yotta Yotta**'s new NetStorager System enables organizations to share and access information from anywhere in North America with near simultaneous symmetrical updating. It has broad applications for large-



AMEC prepares for communications equipment installation. (Photo Frantic Film's computer programmers and artists spent six months YottaYotta's Storage Management System provides a single logical environment.

# ACCESS

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

July - September 2004

First Class Facility for Marine Mammals

by Lauren Usui

Along British Columbia's coast, there are those that care for the ill, injured or abandoned. Their patients are given expert treatment and supportive care to recuperate before being discharged back into their natural environment – the ocean.

The slippery, wet patients of the Vancouver Aquarium's Marine Mammal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre are commonly smaller mammals such as harbour seals, but the rescue and care for other marine mammals such as elephant seals, sea otters, sea lions, porpoises, dolphins and killer whales are also part of the Centre's operations.

The Marine Mammal Rescue and Rehabilitation Program at the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre has been involved with the rescue and rehabilitation of marine animals since 1960. Currently, the program cares for about 50 distressed marine mammals a year and is expecting over 40 animals to be rescued and rehabilitated in 2004.

In 2002, the Vancouver Aquarium helped save Springer, a young killer whale found in poor health and separated from her family pod. The rescue program raised significant funds to help successfully reunite Springer with her pod. Similarly, the Centre established a fund in 2004 to help reunite another killer whale, Luna, with his pod.

The Centre runs without operational support from government and relies heavily on volunteers and donations from the public.



Continued on back page

# **Program Benefits Disable**

by Carla Shore

Robyn Beckman had been looking for a way to earn an income with her computer during the six years she had collected disability, but the former advertising rep had no one to teach her. Then she heard about the Internet Business Development for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program created by the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Central Kootenay.

"It was the answer to six years of praying," says Beckman. "I'm going to be a webmaster! Within a week of starting the course I was creating Web sites. Already I'm proving to myself that I can do this."

Kay Ryan, project coordinator for the CFDC of Central Kootenay, started the program to offer training for people who are unable to study in conventional ways due to their disabilities. Participants with disabilities receive training in

Web design and business management to create their own Web store in **Virtual Mall Canada** — **www.virtualmall.ca**, where they sell art and gifts from artisans in their region on commission.

"We are thrilled with the recognition the program has received from our funding partners at Western Economic Diversification Canada," says Ryan. "Their support has helped us expand the program both in our region and into other areas of the province."

Marcel Willaert graduated from the program last spring. His Web store, Spanky's Gallery (www.spankymarc.ca), features the work of more than 10 artisans and artists, including his own non-traditional Aboriginal art pieces.

"The biggest draw of this program was the ability to become self-sufficient and get off disability," says Willaert, who suffers from spinal problems that limit his mobility. "The program rocked! It allows me to work from home, which was a big selling point, because I can't sit still for more than a couple hours at a time. It's given each of us [program participants] a sense of freedom, and now that I'm being productive, has

made me feel better about myself."

Willaert's site has been up and running for a year now, and while sales are slowly coming in, he is working hard to find a bigger market for his artists.

"I update the site every week and try to keep it as fresh as I can," he says. "We had a marketing course in the program, so they taught us how to work with the search engines."



For the artisans whose works are sold at Virtual Mall Canada, becoming involved offers them a chance to sell their works without having to maintain their own Web sites. Airheart Design owner Deb Borsos produces hand-painted clothing and art pieces. Borsos says she doesn't have time to take care of a Web site herself, and having an entrepreneur post her images and take care of e-commerce makes sales easier for her (www.bcartisan.com/deb\_boros\_page.htm).

"As an artist, it gives me another outlet for my sales, and it gives me much broader exposure than I could have on my own," said Borsos. "The entrepreneurs market their sites continually, and with so many artists involved, we're all promoting it as well. This program is mutually beneficial to the artists and the entrepreneurs."

### ntrepreneurs and Artisans

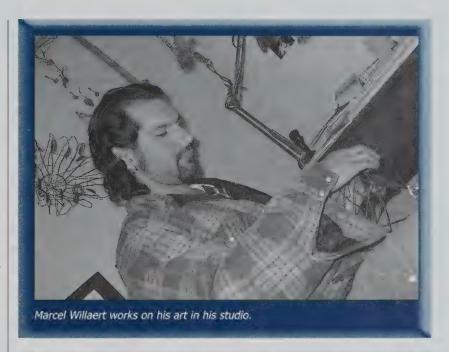
Robyn Beckman expects to complete her studies by early summer, and then link up with artists in Princeton where she lives. "This course has taken all the parts of Web design and put it into one program, but I'm able to work at my own pace," she says. "Because of my disabilities, I do my work in two-hour blasts."

She can't wait to get going with her own site. "I hope to be able to make a little money from the Web store, but I dream big," she says. "Eventually, I'd like to earn enough money to someday take me right off disability. My life would be a lot happier if I could support myself and my medical problems."

The online course is now accredited through Selkirk College in Castlegar. In March 2004, the program received a Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation. And, in late April it also won a national Community Learning Award from the Conference Board of Canada, which is given out to programs that focus on learning efforts that use information and technology to develop necessary skills and competencies.

Thanks to Kay Ryan and Community Futures, dreams are coming true for disabled entrepreneurs across B.C.

For more information about the CFDC of Central Kootenay's programs and services for disabled entrepreneurs, call (250) 352-1933, or visit their office in Nelson or their Web site at: www.futures.bc.ca.\*





Program participant Donna Salby works at her home computer creating Web sites as part of her class assignments.

#### **First Class Facility for Marine Mammals**

continued from front page

Western Economic Diversification Canada has invested \$405,832 to help

the Aquarium relocate its Rehabilitation Centre to a new site provided by the Port of Vancouver.

The assistance will also help the aquarium to acquire new marine and veterinary equipment to ensure that mammals are received, quarantined and cared for in the most effective manner before they are released back into the wild. According to Marie Dickens of the Vancouver Aquarium, "the new equipment and facilities have provided

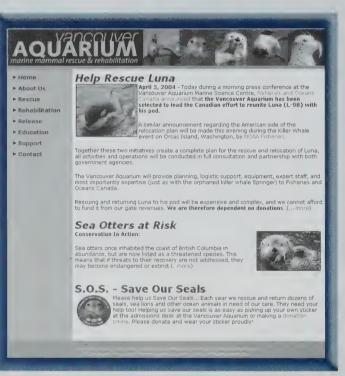
greater opportunities for success and effectiveness with our rescue objectives."

The Vancouver Aquarium is the only facility of its kind in Western Canada that is internationally recognized for its high quality education and outreach programs and marine mammal expertise.

The Vancouver Aquarium has also received funding through the Canada-British Columbia Infrastructure Program, administered through Western Economic Diversification Canada. The \$2 million federal/provincial infrastructure funding will be used to construct a new Main Discovery Education Centre.

For more information about the Vancouver Aquarium and its marine rescue programs, visit www.vanaqua.org.

For more information about WD programs and services, or the Canada-British Columbia Infrastructure Program, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit www.wd.gc.ca.\*



### **Effort in Western Canada**

scale data backup and sharing by groups ranging from the military to the medical and financial sectors.

Karpoff, Yotta Yotta's chief technology officer and cofounder, says, "You can have data centres that are all over the world and have them behave as if they're in the same room."

Literally. Last fall, NRC-IRAP support enabled YottaYotta to prototype and benchmark a system component that minimizes the bandwidth required for data sharing. The test run between YottaYotta in Edmonton and Silicon Graphics in Ottawa resulted in a 100-fold performance improvement compared to traditional data sharing methods.

In 2003, WD contributed to a groundbreaking project to apply the NetStorager technology to the networking and storage of digital MRI images among healthcare facilities in the Edmonton area.



atics Research Lab, Simon Fraser University) Tar Monster's five minutes of silver screen fame. I all information collected across a customer's diverse storage

#### Communication Under Fire

Two hundred metres. That's all that separated British Columbians from a massive communications brown-out in August 2003 when the huge Okanagan Mountain fire near Kelowna almost fried one of the province's primary wireless communications towers.

This fire season, B.C.'s Emergency Response Team is ready for such a worst-case communications scenario. The new Advanced Mobile Emergency Communications (AMEC) vehicle is a self-contained high-tech communications hub on wheels, ready to provide coordinated emergency communications even when all else fails.

"AMEC is unique," says Peter Anderson, director of the **Telematics Research Lab** at **Simon Fraser University** in Burnaby, and leader of the WD-funded AMEC project. "It is designed and scaled to be a mobile communications gateway to support community-wide emergency response and recovery operations."

Looking like a converted Brinks van, the AMEC contains more than 20 distinct state-of-the-art communications technologies that will link emergency response officials via broadband wireless, VHF radio and satellite phone. AMEC also supports multimedia applications to provide distant decision makers with real-time images of the disaster.

"NRC-IRAP support for this project has been crucial, especially in helping build partnerships with private sector firms in Western Canada," says Anderson.

For more information about the support programs offered by the National Research Council, including IRAP, visit www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca. For information about Western Economic Diversification Canada's programs and services, visit www.wd.gc.ca.

### Manitoba's Filmless Radiology Network Grows

by Lee Gregg



Members of the medical community from Norway House Cree Nation participated in the announcement of extended teleradiology services to two northern Manitoba communities with Dr. Blake McClarty, the program director of diagnostic imaging at St. Boniface Hospital, via broadband technology.

The St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre is home to the Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) — a central storage device and cornerstone of Manitoba's filmless radiology network. This state-of-the-art technology allows physicians and radiologists to view a patient's radiology images from their desktop computer without the delay of transporting x-ray film, the conventional means of transferring images.

Norway House Cree Nation and the Town of Churchill recently entered into partnership with St. Boniface General Hospital to enhance locally delivered health services by becoming the first two rural communities to be connected via broadband technology to Winnipeg and the filmless radiology network. This new service is expected to have a tremendous positive impact on the health care provided to the largely Aboriginal and Métis populations of these communities.

Extending teleradiology services to these communities was made possible through \$99,999 in WD funding that was used to purchase equipment, upgrade infrastructure and provide training to local staff.

Residents will now have access to high-end medical diagnostics and care without having to wait up to five days for x-ray results. It is also expected to significantly reduce the need for patients to fly to Winnipeg for routine examinations and tests. Existing broadband technology will be used to transmit digitized pictures to Winnipeg, where viewing stations are set up at the Health Sciences Centre and the St. Boniface General Hospital. Technicians will interpret the images and communicate with their colleagues in the north, allowing for instantaneous consultation and diagnosis.

The remoteness of northern communities presents a unique challenge in the ability to provide local health services. Through the introduction of this innovative technology, health services are being enhanced in these communities, an important step in enabling them to prosper and grow. The Government of Canada is pleased to be building strong rural communities and investing in people – Canada's most important economic asset.

This project contributes to the on-going federal strategy to improve health care for Canadians, and builds on WD's \$1.25 million investment in PACS at the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre in 1988.◆

# Creating a Vision for Success in Alberta

Creating new opportunities often takes vision. Aboriginal, industry and educational representatives partnered to form the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Committee with a vision to increase the number of Aboriginal people participating in Alberta apprenticeship programs.

In 2002, the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAAP) was launched to promote apprenticeship and industry training to Aboriginal people, communities and organizations in the province. Quite simply, the AAAP moved the vision into reality by providing industry and First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples with a "win-win" situation – an increased pool of skilled labour and more employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The initiative bridges cultures and provides applicants with support and guidance needed to choose the right trade and secure a position with partner employers. And, one of the best aspects of the AAAP is the opportunity for an applicant to start and complete an apprenticeship program and earn an industry-appropriate wage while they learn a trade.

The employer partners in the AAAP recognize the diversity and potential of the apprentices they have hired, as well as the steadily increasing Aboriginal representation in the workforce since the program began two years ago.

Piloted in regions with large Aboriginal populations Edmonton, Fort McMurray and High Level – the AAAP program is already a success. There are currently 76 apprentices participating in 11 trades, including carpentry, electrical, machining and welding.

Ron Paul is a third-year millwright apprentice with Syncrude Canada Ltd. in Fort McMurray. Both apprentice and employer feedback is conclusive.

Syncrude Canada's Team Coordinator Michael Hewson said, "The AAAP has been very visible and given us an excellent worker who is very eager to learn his trade. Ron is becoming a very competent millwright."

"Before becoming an apprentice, I didn't feel I had a real future," commented Paul. "The AAAP provided me

with a good foundation in my life. It is an excellent program and I have recommended it to many others. I now have goals that are clear and the path to a journeyman is pretty straightforward."

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) invested \$1 million in this innovative program that helps to address labour shortages in the trades and provides meaningful career opportunities to Alberta Aboriginals.

For more information about the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, call 1-866-408-1840 or visit www.thinktrades.com. •



Ron Paul, third-year millwright apprentice, wa hired by Syncrude Canada under the AAAP.

# Mixing it Up at L.A.B. Soundworks

by Cameron Zimmer



It's the perennial question for professional musicians — when are you going to settle down and get a day job?

Guitarist and drummer Lee Bell heard that query often enough during his days on the road.

His response was to start **L.A.B. Soundworks** recording studio, an initiative that shows not every musician has to give up music to get steady employment.

"Being a musician required traveling a lot and I wanted something more stationary," says Bell, who has played in a band since he was 12. "Knowing all of the musicians I did before just opened up all sorts of opportunities to do recording and teaching."

In November 2001, Bell made Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, his musical base and constructed a small but versatile recording studio. It's filled with state-of-the-art equipment purchased with financial assistance from Aboriginal Business Canada.

Even though L.A.B. is over 3,000 kilometres from Nashville, Los Angeles and other music hubs, it records artists in 5.1 Dolby digital sound with the same mixing software used by Shania Twain and other marquee musicians.

"Location is not a huge factor anymore because of the Internet. With digital technology, you can have a studio pretty much anywhere," says Bell.

Since opening this high-quality studio to northern musicians, L.A.B. Soundworks has flooded western airwaves with distinct local sounds. Many of the 30 acts Bell has recorded have already made it to Aboriginal music charts in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

"He's made it affordable for local people who can't afford to go to the city to be heard," says Charlotte Sinclair, a business development officer for **Beaver River Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)**. The CFDC also provided Bell with a loan to establish his music school.

Bell leads a hectic life teaching music, recording artists and playing gigs with four Saskatchewan bands, but he doesn't have any plans to slow down. Soon he will offer DJ, sound and lighting services for local events.

All in all, a day job and then some.

For more information about L.A.B. Soundworks, phone (306) 236-5480 or e-mail lab\_sound@hotmail.com. For information about the closest Community Futures Development Corporations across the West, visit www.wd.gc.ca/pos/cfdc/xindex\_e.asp. •

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

# Hydro Project Helps Build Foundation for a Secure Energy Supply

by Carla Shore

The **Douglas First Nation**, located in southwestern B.C., relies on diesel-powered generators to provide electricity. The Band is not connected to the B.C. Hydro grid and is subject to equipment failure and local air pollution.

Thanks to assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), the Douglas Band may soon be able to power their villages with electricity generated by their own small power-generating facility.

The 233-member Douglas Band reached a participation agreement with Cloudworks Energy of Vancouver to develop three run-of-the-river power-generating facilities on Douglas, Fire and Stokke creeks.

"Our intention is to harness the untapped energy of the water in a way that preserves its natural flow and also supports the generation of renewable energy," said Douglas First Nations Chief Darryl Peters. "This project will allow us to preserve the biodiversity of our lands and waters and create new economic opportunities for our people."

Run-of-the-river projects are different in design, appearance and impact from conventional hydroelectric projects. Water is diverted from a creek, through a pipeline and into a small powerhouse, where the water produces electricity by turning a turbine. There is very little threat to fish habitats, and it can also provide a long-term source of renewable electricity that can displace energy sources that produce greenhouse gases.

The Douglas First Nation will conduct an archaeological impact assessment and legal land survey to support the establishment of three generating facilities. The project will strengthen their communities' ability to pursue new

economic opportunities and develop new housing and infrastructure that may attract off-reserve members back to the area.

Unemployment rates for the Band are around 80 per cent. It is significant that several band members were trained as fisheries technicians with previous funding from Cloudworks Energy. Six members will be employed directly in conducting the archaeological assessment and land survey work.

This is just one of eight projects announced by WD in late March to help rural and First Nations communities to develop alternative energy as means to stimulate their economies. For more information, visit www.wd.gc.ca.



Chief Darryl Petters (C-L) and Cloudworks Energy Principal David Andrews (C-R) shake hands marking the signing of the participation agreement as band councilors and other Cloudworks representatives look on.

Photo courtesy of David Nairne & Associates.

#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

If undeliverable please return to:

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## Access West - It's Time to Hear from Our Readers!

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has an inspiring mandate: to promote the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada, and to advance the region's interests in national policies and programs.

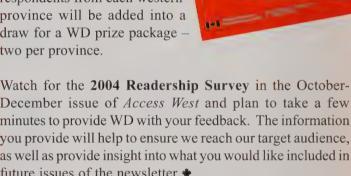
As the Department has moved away from programs and services specifically for small business, so has the focus of Access West. In the past two years, the newsletter has provided its readers with a more complete snapshot of WD's three strategic business lines - Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Communities. Each of these business lines, although often interconnected, has different readership interests.

The goals of Access West are simple. Foster support for WD and its approach toward economic development and diversification in Western Canada. Provide information about WD's investments and activities. Inform potential users of the programs and services offered by Western Economic Diversification Canada, directly or through its partners in the Western Canada Business Service Network.

Now we need to hear from you, our readers. Are you receiving information that is useful, timely and interesting?

We'll even provide some incentive! The names of respondents from each western province will be added into a draw for a WD prize package two per province.

Watch for the 2004 Readership Survey in the October-December issue of Access West and plan to take a few minutes to provide WD with your feedback. The information you provide will help to ensure we reach our target audience, as well as provide insight into what you would like included in future issues of the newsletter.



The Changing Climate of Ou

Environment



1-888-338-WEST

www.wd.gc.ca

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

October - December 2004

### Mr. Banker, Stand Up and **Take Notice!**

Unless you plan to use personal assets to establish or grow your business, financing is inevitable. But "positive thinking" and a "great idea" are not enough when you visit your banker.

Whether you're getting started or have plans to expand, your banker will be looking for a presentation that is solid and persuasive. For a clear snapshot of how much money you need to finance your business, do your homework. According to the Business Development Bank of Canada, there are four keys elements that bankers look for.

Can you manage the business? Show your banker that your have the experience, skills, determination and self-confidence necessary to be successful.

Is your business viable? A solid business plan is a must. It should be clear, structured and short, and

cover all the elements of your business idea. Don't forget market research - supported by facts and sources — and provide two years' financial projections.

What is your financial strength? Be prepared to disclose your personal and business net worth. Bankers use this information to judge your ability to meet financial obligations. They will use your past credit history as an indicator for the future.

What investments or collateral are you putting on the line? Invariability, bankers will be looking for you to make some investment - capital and/or security — as proof of commitment.

In other words, give your banker a reason to stand up and take notice of your business, large or small. Make it easy for them to lend you money. \*

#### Access West

October - December 2004

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Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# MESSAGE FROM The Honourable Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen Minister Western Economic Diversification Generating nearly 80 per cent of all new jobs, small business is the driving force behind Western Canada's economy.

That's why, together with the Business Development Bank of Canada and other sponsors, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is proud to recognize the talent, determination and ingenuity of Canadian small and mediumsized business entrepreneurs during Small Business Week, October 17-23. This year's theme, "YOU'RE THE POWER behind the Canadian economy, let's share the energy!" recognizes the invaluable

contributions entrepreneurs make year after year.

WD and its Western Canada Business Service Network support entrepreneurship in communities across the West by helping small and medium-sized enterprises find and tap into what they need to get started and grow. We are pleased to share some of the achievements of our network partners and the clients they serve.

Working in partnership, WD is building a stronger West and a stronger Canada.◆

# **Building Business Through Relationships**

by Joanne Blake Style for Success Inc.

Over lunch, an accountant friend who owns a small business admitted to me, "Part of the reason I became an accountant was so I could stay in my office and not have to do any networking!" How many of you can relate to that? You're not alone.

People's number one fear of public speaking has been replaced by a new fear — walking into a room full of strangers and having to interact with them. Sounds a lot like networking, doesn't it? Networking doesn't have to be scary! Some of the benefits far outweigh the perils.

- Increase your resource base to acquire information and alliances.
- Gain new contacts who will refer their own network of potential clients.
- Build support and a higher profile to attract new business opportunities.

Networking is the process of developing personal and professional relationships for mutual gain—it's not selling. Build relationships, and as people get to know, like and trust you, referrals and more business will follow.

Networks take time and effort to build, but practicing a few good habits can make it easier to walk into that room full of strangers.

The benefits of networking are too important to your business. Don't let fear hold you back. Begin building your network today.

As Confucius said, "Dig your well, before you thirst."\*

#### Seven Effective Networking Habits

- 1. Don't sell. Instead, get to know people through conversation (ask questions and be a good listener).
- 2. Arrive on time (if an event is in full swing and the energy level is high, it is difficult to match it).
- 3. Mix and mingle right away, rather than sit down (try standing near the door or food table).
- 4. Be open and approachable (smile and make good eye contact).
- 5. Act as though you are a host (introduce yourself and others).
- 6. Set reasonable goals (meet two or three new people and reconnect with two or three others).
- 7. Relax and have fun (the more you practice the easier it becomes).

Joanne Blake is a speaker and coach specializing in protocol, conversation, networking and personal image. Her company, Style for Success, partnered with WD in 2000 to offer public seminars on a variety of subjects important to business. Blake often appears in the national media offering critiques and advice. For more information, visit www.styleforsuccess.com or call (780) 472-0767.

# **Angels – Helping Entre**

by Kent Dixon

One of the first challenges any business owner or entrepreneur faces when starting a new business venture is securing adequate capital. Many entrepreneurs with exciting and innovative ideas have been turned away or given up after being told by a bank that their ideas were not a "sensible financial risk."

When personal funding and investments by friends and family are used up, where can entrepreneurs turn for intermediate funding before resorting to traditional financing through a bank or other financial institutions? Fortunately, there is an accessible alternative for first-time business owners and entrepreneurs:

angel investors.

What exactly is an angel investor? By definition, most angels are independent venture capitalists that have funding at their disposal and are looking for new, innovative and ultimately profitable ways to invest their funds outside of traditional methods

and markets. Angels vary widely depending on their personal investment strategies and ultimate financial goals. They may choose to focus on investments only dealing in a specific industry or business sector, or even limited to a specific geographic region or area. Their individuality is nearly limitless in its breadth and diversity.

Angel investors differ from traditional venture capitalists. They are looking for suitable investments that also provide personal opportunities, whereas venture capitalists are professional investors who manage a fund and seek suitable investments for that fund. A venture capitalist may have no experience directly related to the entrepreneur's field of business, whereas an angel often experience relevant entrepreneur's company and may even have a personal interest in seeing the company succeed above and beyond securing a return on their investment. Entrepreneurs may find themselves in mentorship situations, developing win-win partnerships with investors who share not only their personal experience in the industry and financial strength, but also the enthusiasm and drive to see their business or concepts succeed.



# neurs Spread Their Wings

Generally speaking, venture capitalists deal in capital contributions in excess of \$1 million, leaving all opportunities below \$1 million open to angels and other private investors. Angels will often invest in new business ventures even before the initial idea has been fully developed or realized. This style, known as seed capital or seed money investment, provides the entrepreneur or business owner with the necessary funds to fully capitalize on and develop an entirely new product or business concept from the idea stage to reality. In some cases, seed money is the only funds an angel will contribute to a given project, but other investors will contribute throughout the life cycle of a product, spurring the project forward from idea to prototype, design to production, marketing and distribution, and beyond.

Investing relatively small amounts of money in the initial stages of business development, angels will not usually ask for significant initial equity stakes in a business, but look towards future returns as the business or concept grows and becomes more successful. This fact alone makes angel investors an attractive alternative to traditional funding options for new entrepreneurs who have limited resources during the initial stages of business development. •

#### Finding An Angel Investor

Virtually every Canadian city has one or more organization whose sole purpose is to pair angel investors with entrepreneurs. For example, Edmonton-based Deal Generator (www.dealgenerator.com) exists with the purpose of "Connecting Innovation with Investment." Developed under the guidance of Economic Development Edmonton, Deal Generator provides one-stop partnership services allowing Alberta entrepreneurs and accredited investors to find business partners in similar fields of interest.

Visitors to the Deal Generator site have the opportunity to become members and identify themselves confidentially as either an entrepreneur or an investor. It does not guarantee any financing partnerships out of the process, but does indicate both investors and entrepreneurs can gain a wealth of new knowledge through the exposure the organization provides.

Through organizations such as Deal Generator, potential investors have the confidence that any business plans they receive for consideration have been pre-screened investment opportunities, allowing them to maximize the potential benefits of involvement. Entrepreneurs can also be confident in knowing that any potential investors they meet through Deal Generator have met the requirements to be considered "Accredited Investors," as identified by the Alberta Securities Act.

#### Other Resources:

- Industry Canada –
   http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insof-sdf.nsf/en/Home
- Canadian Angel Investment Network www.angelinvestmentnetwork.ca
- National Angel Organization www.angelinvestor.ca
- **B.C. Angel Forum** www.angelforum.org

# **Building CED Capac**

by Bob Jeffery, Ec.D. CED Innovations Inc.

In March 2002, the Economic Developers Association of Alberta (EDA Alberta), along with their various partners including Alberta Community Futures Development Corporations, Alberta Economic Development regional offices and Industry Canada, launched their Basic Community Economic Development (CED) Training Program.

These four-course, two-day training programs were designed as an educational tool that covers the practical application of community economic development. They have been delivered to small urban centres and rural communities throughout Alberta over the past two years. Participants in the training programs include local elected officials, administrators, chambers of commerce, small business representatives, as well as representation from other community organizations.

Since the initial launch, seven advanced courses have been developed including: Business Retention and Expansion, Business and Investment Attraction, Opportunity Identification, Project Management in Economic Development, Strategic Alliances and Partnerships, The Site Selection Process and Supporting Agriculture through Community Economic Development.

EDA Alberta's program development partners continue to expand and now include the Canadian Rural Secretariat, Alberta Value Added Corporation and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's CARD Program.

A measurement database has been developed to measure the capacity building that takes place at the community level after receiving the CED training. The results to date have been impressive. Of the 85 communities who have received the basic program over the past two years, approximately 30 per cent of the communities have achieved significant CED capacity building. A further 40 per cent are in the early stages of capacity building.

Following an economic development conference in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, in October 2003, leaders of three of the Alberta communities who had already taken the basic training and four of the advanced programs attested to the impact that the Community Economic Development Accreditation Process (CEDAP) training has had in their communities.

Pat Burns, mayor of the Town of Hanna, offered the program high praise. "We needed to work towards stability in the county... We weren't active in seeking economic development until CEDAP. Now we've got the whole community involved and we've been doing some awesome stuff."

Burns said that a whole gamut of people participated in two training sessions, and everyone was inspired to not only go after economic development, but, more importantly, enhance the lifestyle in the community.

"Our citizens took the CEDAP training under the umbrella of the Economic Development board," commented the Town of Edson's Mayor Gary Mahon. "Right now we're getting our feet under us and setting directions on where we want to go. None of this would have happened if we hadn't had the training."

The Town of Hinton's Deputy Mayor Glenn Taylor noted that there are only positive stories to come from the program. "We faced a downturn in coal and the softwood

# ACCESS

#### SASKATCHEWAN

October - December 2004

# **CSBSC Celebrates 10 Years** of Change

by Heather Waldern Hinds

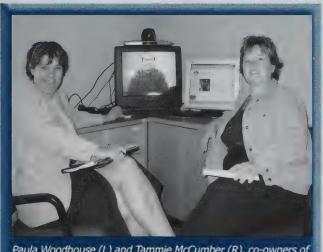
Remember when the most cutting-edge technology was a fax machine?

The Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre's (CSBSC) InfoFax service was its primary tool for distributing information to clients when the centre opened in 1994. InfoFax was turned off two years ago; the Internet has revolutionized how the centre helps its clients.

Part of a national network, the CSBSC provides information on government services, programs and regulations through its electronic Business Information System database (BIS). The

seven Business Information staff can answer questions about starting a new business or improving an existing one, preparing a business plan, finding new markets or getting ready to export.

BIS is the core of the resources, but clients can now research and write business plans entirely online, as well as receive live, same-time assistance from an officer via the phone and Internet.



Paula Woodhouse (L) and Tammie McCumber (R), co-owners of The Giggle Factory in Saskatoon and Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC) clients, participated in an e-business video-conference with e-business specialist Trevor Poapst, from The Business Link in Edmonton during the CSBSC's 10th anniversary open house, September 8th. The Internet hasn't reduced inperson client visits, but it has changed client requests. Most clients now conduct basic research on the Internet before visiting staff for more advanced information. The centre provided answers to over one million client inquiries in the last 10 years.

Evolutions in service since 1994 have extended the CSBSC's reach. Sixteen regional access sites bring the centre's resources to smaller communities, while a mobile library circulates information to Aboriginal Business Service Network clients. Business counselling

services have been added, and the CSBSC is now the front line for trade and export information in Saskatchewan through the national Team Canada Inc. service.

For more information on the CSBSC, call (306) 956-2323 in Saskatoon or 1-800-667-4374, or visit www.cbsc.org/sask.

# And, Soundstage has Star Role in

by Cameron Zimmer



The storyline for the Saskatchewan film and television industry is looking less like a B-movie and more like the script of an action adventure.

Saskatchewan-grown productions have launched the film industry from a \$2.5 million supporting role in 1991 to a \$40 million rising star in the province's economy. The province now lays claim to Genie award-winning film Falling Angels, and Corner Gas, this year's top-rated original Canadian television series.

"I didn't anticipate doing a T.V. show in Saskatchewan when I was a kid," said Corner Gas star Brent Butt in a CTV interview. "There was no industry. You couldn't just go to Weyburn and shoot a movie like you can now. This is awesome."

So what's drawing marquee productions like Corner Gas to Saskatchewan? It could be the great tax incentives or the production crews that come recommended by Hollywood star Andy Garcia. Recently though, the newly constructed Canada-Saskatchewan Production Studios, known collectively as the Soundstage, are generating the buzz.

The \$10.7 million Soundstage was designed to bring more film productions to Saskatchewan. Western Economic Diversification Canada provided \$3 million and the Province of Saskatchewan contributed over \$7 million to construct an industry pacesetter.

The project consultants asked for design advice from Economic Research Associates in Los Angeles and other industry experts to ensure that the Soundstage was built to meet every film production need.

"Most studios in the country are retrofitted warehouses and old buildings because they need the space. The Soundstage is unique because it was purpose-built for production film and TV," says Valerie Creighton, CEO of SaskFilm.

When the state-of-the-art facility opened in the fall of 2002, it set a new standard for film production in the province. With 82,000 total sq. ft. and 35,000 sq. ft. of studio space, big ideas and large productions fit right in.

# ction! askatchewan's Film Industry

The spacious studio has people excited because it offers everything a production needs in one, fully loaded shooting location. In addition to studio space, it has a carpentry shop, an art department, a darkroom and other support facilities. It also offers first class, furnished production offices and dressing rooms. And, there are on-site vendors who will take care of lighting, 3-D animation and meals for film crews.

"The Soundstage in Regina was amazing. It's such a perfect facility. The fact that it was built as a soundstage makes all the difference," said Butt in a SaskFilm News interview. "Having the soundstage in Regina made this [Corner Gas] possible. Not sure how we would have done it otherwise."

"Saskatchewan has proven itself to be a location of choice," concludes Creighton. "Saskatchewan's state of-the-art soundstage facility, award-winning producers, low production costs and an exceptional crew base all contribute to making Saskatchewan an efficient, creative and cost-effective place to do business."

And that's a wrap!

If you want to find out more about the Soundstage or film production in Saskatchewan, contact SaskFilm at (306) 798-3456, e-mail general@saskfilm.com or visit www.saskfilm.com.

#### Movies bring big rewards to Saskatchewan small businesses

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#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### **Growing Forward**

by Bev Fast

It's been eight years since Rhoda O'Malley opened **Step Ahead Shoes**, a mall-based retail store located in Saskatoon. Her concept was to offer comfortable, well-made, stylish shoes to fashion and health conscious baby boomers. Sounds

simple enough, but O'Malley had done her homework. She knew there was a void in the marketplace and she meant to fill it.

Her first major challenge, like so many other small businesspeople, was financing. "Getting access to funding is a real challenge for people starting a retail operation," O'Malley says. "Most banks will finance bricks and mortar but not inventory, and that's what most mall-based stores need the financing for."

O'Malley turned to Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (W.E.), a member of the Women's Enterprise Initiative established by Western Economic Diversification Canada to provide business information, financing and services to women entrepreneurs across the four western provinces.

"I don't think I'd be here today if it wasn't for Women Entrepreneurs. I went to them for initial financing. Since then, I've used a *ton* of W.E. services. I've taken different workshops and used their business advisory services many times. It's been hugely beneficial."

The first store was the beginning of a much broader vision. In 1999, Step Ahead opened a second location. In 2003, it partnered with ECCO Shoes to open Western Canada's first ECCO store. In their latest move, O'Malley and her

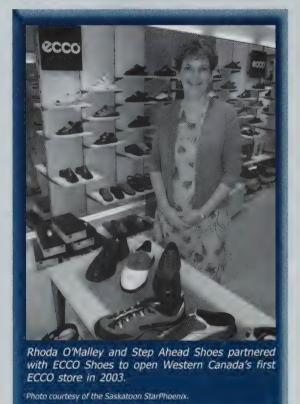
husband/business partner, Tom, opened Propulsion, a store that targets a younger, trendier demographic.

O'Malley's achievements have earned the recognition of her peers. This spring, Step Ahead Shoes won the pan-western 2004 Women's Enterprise Initiative Award of Excellence for an Existing Business and the Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Existing Business Award. She also received the Saskatoon YWCA Women of Distinction Award in the "Entrepreneur" category.

A passion for business keeps O'Malley moving through the everyday challenges of a retail operation — that and a good business plan. "A business plan gives you so much information. It can tell you if you're on track or

if you need to revise your goals. It's a living document. You have to revisit it annually, but you need it to grow forward."

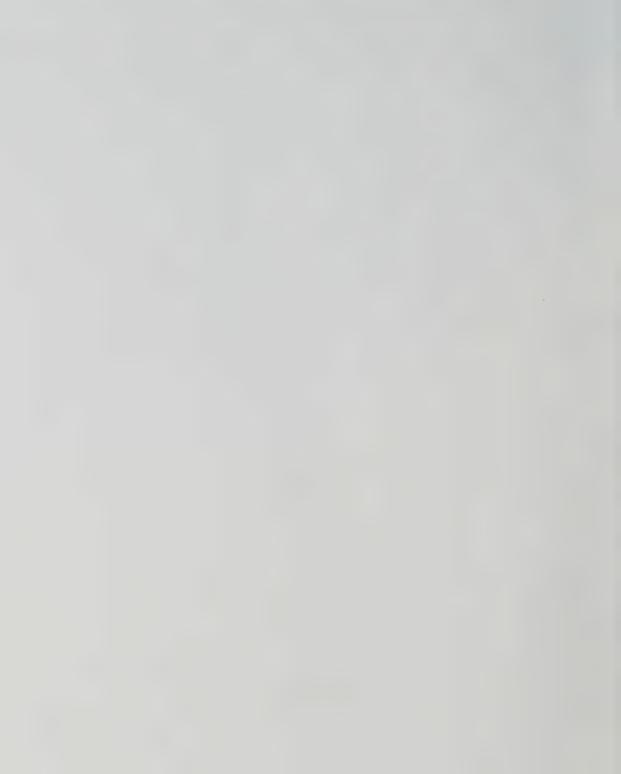
For more information about Step Ahead Shoes, call (306) 978-7837 or visit www.stepaheadshoes.com.



Thank you for completing the Access West Readership Survey. Prize package draws will be made on November 30th!

Please fax your completed survey to (780) 495-6223 or mail to:

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Edmonton AB T5J 4H7



#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# Location, Location, Location ... It's All in How You Look at It

by Jean Collins

"Location, location, location" is the mantra for many small businesses. But despite its lack of walk-in traffic, a St. Benedict business considers its rural setting to be an asset.

The lower cost of doing business, a loyal staff with a strong work ethic and the community support make St. Benedict

(population 100) an ideal location for Custom Advertising Products St. Benedict (C.A.P.S.). A quality product, on-time delivery, repeat business and referrals from existing customers have made C.A.P.S. a very successful enterprise — regardless of location.

C.A.P.S. applies screenprinted and/or embroidered logos to shirts, jackets, caps, backpacks and other promotional items. "We've printed logos on everything from steak knives to a curling rock," says Holly Muller, who owns C.A.P.S. with her husband,

Willie. The size of each job varies from as few of one item, to as many as 60,000 pieces.

The Mullers started their business in their own home, expanded it to the garage and recently to a new workshop. Along with their physical expansion, the number of staff has grown from just Holly and Willie to include two full-time and three part-time employees. Willie values their

computer programs and array of screen-printing and embroidery equipment at \$200,000.

The Sagehill Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC), located in Bruno, provided the Mullers with two loans over the last eight years to purchase new

equipment. C.A.P.S. used this equipment to expand their production line capacity.

"C.A.P.S.'s success demonstrates the diversity of entrepreneurial options open to rural businesspeople and permits them to maintain their rural lifestyle," says Dianne Olchowski, general manager of Sagehill CFDC. "The fact that C.A.P.S. customer base is broader than the local area and draws from across Western Canada adds to its viability."

Holly tells individuals interested in setting up a business in rural Saskatchewan, "Go for it."

Holly and Willie Muller in their workshop.

Photo courtesy of Bruce Dyck, The Western Producer.

For more information on C.A.P.S., call (306) 289-2107.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) provides funding to Saskatchewan's 13 Community Futures Development Corporations.

### Small Business Profits From Ca

by Bev Fast

When the Canadian Light Source (CLS) project at the University of Saskatchewan (UofS) was first announced in 1999, it generated tremendous excitement...and not just in scientific and research communities.

Saskatchewan's small business community has benefited from Canada's biggest science project. To date, more than \$138 million in contracts have been awarded for construction and services, and over 65 per cent of this total value has gone to Saskatchewan companies.

The building housing the synchrotron was designed by a team of engineers from the Saskatoon office of UMA Engineering Ltd., along with local architect AODBT as a sub-consultant and together with the Canadian Light Source Inc. UMA acted as overall project manager for the UofS, a role that is only now winding down.

"The CLS is a fantastic tool for Canada in general and it's been an excellent project for us. It has introduced us into the global synchrotron community," says Barry Hawkins, leader of UMA's Advanced Research Facilities Group. "We've been working in the high energy physics community since 1988 with clients such as TRIUMF [Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics located in Vancouver], but this was our first synchrotron project. Now we're doing work on the synchrotron being built in Australia and we're in talks to do work on other international synchrotron projects. The CLS has opened a number of avenues for us."

The CLS has also opened doors for smaller suppliers. Startco Engineering Ltd., a Saskatoon-based company that builds custom electrical products and protective relays for a wide variety of industries, was contracted to help resolve the issue of a "clean grounds" for the beamlines.

"Sensitive measurements will be taken and the UofS/CLS wanted to eliminate interference from systems such as heating, lighting and ventilation. Our product solved the problem," says Startco Applications Engineer Blair Baldwin.

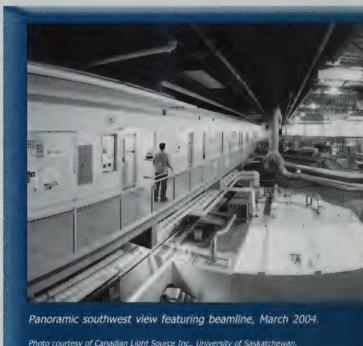


Photo courtesy of Canadian Light Source Inc., University of Saskatchewan.

The company is hoping the experience leads to other work. In the meantime, Baldwin says they got a surprise during a recent tour of the facility. "There was equipment from a large, well-known manufacturer. It contained our ground fault protection equipment. Our product hadn't been specifically built for the CLS application; it was our standard product that we supply to other companies. It was exciting to see our gear come back to Saskatoon that way."

### da's "Biggest Science Project"

Scientific Instrumentation Ltd. is another Saskatoon-based company that has benefited from the project. The company designs and manufactures specialized electronic instruments and equipment for scientific research, industrial and military applications.



"We were involved as part of a technology transfer agreement with the CLS and UofS for a motor control system," says SIL President Larry Cooper. "We licensed the system from them. It had been developed to a reasonable point, but we took it to a higher level and then supplied it back."

That's the nature of technology transfer; it essentially moves technology out of the laboratory into the commercial arena. "Now it has become a product for us. We're currently in the early stages of marketing it to other synchrotron projects in Australia and Spain," Cooper says.

Now that the CLS is operational, businesses are discussing potential research partnerships. According to Rob Slinger, CLS chief business development officer, the key is linking synchrotron capabilities with competitive technology companies that have research and development challenges.

"Each beamline has different capabilities. Each workstation functions like an individual, highly specialized lab. It involves different individuals and different types of research. Some of the beamlines conduct highly esoteric, cuttingedge research. Others perform routine sample analysis."

The CLS is endorsed by 27 Canadian universities and supported by 14 capital funding partners and four operating partners. The Government of Canada, in addition to \$85 million in funding for capital construction, recently announced another \$19 million in operational funding over the next five years. This includes \$16 million from Science & Engineering Research Canada and \$3 million from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

WD provided another level of support through its First Jobs in Science and Technology Program and International Trade Personnel Program, which offer partial salary funding to enable small businesses such as Startco to hire post-secondary graduates.

For more information about the Canadian Light Source, visit www.cls.usask.ca. •

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

# When a Community Comes Together, Good Things Happen

by Bev Fast



St. Isidore de Bellevue, a small francophone community in west central Saskatchewan, had been trying to raise funds for a seniors' residence for years to allow aging family members to retire in their own community. In 1999, the **Association Bénévole de Bellevue Inc.** set out to make it happen. It took a determined team of volunteers five years, but the **Foyer Jésus Marie** welcomed its first residents in April.

The centre not only provides assisted living for 16 seniors, but Yvette Gareau, secretary/treasurer of the association says, "This project has created so many new jobs -12 or 13 full, part-time and casual positions. That's huge in a small community."

From the earliest planning stages, the association worked closely with the Conseil de la Coopération de la

Saskatchewan (CCS). "We had a member of the CCS on our committee right from the start. Later, we worked with the economic development officer to help with our marketing plan and our hiring process." The CCS also helped the association with a business plan and financial forecasts, key elements in obtaining the necessary financing.

"The total facility cost about \$1 million. We raised over \$500,000, mostly from community bingos, and we borrowed the rest from the Rosthern Credit Union," added Gareau. The centre also rents space to a branch of the credit union. "They paid us five years rent up front so we could build the extra space for them. We helped each other."

What makes the Foyer Jésus Marie more remarkable is the level of community involvement. "During construction, we tried to give contracts to people who lived in the area, were from the area or had contacts here. We managed to do this for about 75 per cent of the work. It was wonderful, because they built it as if it were their own home," Gareau says.

"It is really the community that built it. It shows that when you get together as a community, this is what happens."

The CCS is one of four Francophone Economic Development Organizations in the West funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada to encourage economic and cooperative development in Francophone communities.

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# **Creating Comfort For Boat Owners**

by Carla Shore

Boat owners may have invested in a craft with lovely furnishings and a compact kitchen. But the beds aren't a standard size, and sheets are either too big or ill fitting.

Victoria's Marilee Atkinson saw this as an opportunity to create custom-fitted linens for onboard beds and started **Sheets Ahoy Boat Bedding Company**.

"People have expensive boats with sheets that were coming out at the corners or they were using sleeping bags," she said. "I've always worked on or around boats, and have always had a bit of an obsession about nice bedding, so it seemed like a great business for me."

Last fall, Atkinson entered the 2003 Business Plan Contest at the Canada/British Columbia Business Services Society, and was one of five business plans chosen to win a prize package including cash, equipment, services and seminars.

Harbs Bains, operations manager of the Business Services Society, said, "Sheets Ahoy was among the best business plans we received, and Marilee is on her way to developing a very viable business."

"In starting Sheets Ahoy, I did a lot of research and background," says Atkinson. "I was able to get answers to a majority of my research questions on the Business Services Society's Web site. They have the best online site."

Atkinson is moving forward slowly with her business, ensuring things are done right. "I don't want to make mistakes, so I'm taking my time, making sure that everything is set up properly."

Sheets Ahoy currently sells direct to consumers, but based on advice from the Business Services Society, plans to work with distributors eventually to expand its reach. "To eliminate the margin of error, I'd like to fit a lot more boats before I invest in mass producing," Athinson noted.

"When you're in business on your own, you are completely alone," she notes. "Sometimes you're not even sure where to start asking for help. We all need advisory help like this."

For more information about Sheets Ahoy, call 1-866-649-2469 or visit www.sheets-ahoy.com.

The Canada/British Columbia Business Services Society is a member of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network.



#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# Designer Gives New Meaning to the Concept of Recycling

by Lee Gregg



Jenny Petersen and Agnes Frechette.

By transforming used fabrics and textiles into funky fashion, Agnes Frechette of Pinawa, Manitoba, has turned a lifetime of sewing experience into a full-time business.

"I had my first job at nine, sewing ladies undergarments out of cotton sugar bags for  $25 \, \phi$  a pair," said Frechette. Marriage and four children put her entrepreneurial dreams on hold, but she continued to hone her craft by sewing her own children's clothing and taking classes in leather craft, embroidery and dress design.

In 1998, Frechette attended the Winnipeg Folk Festival, which inspired her to start her own business — **Agnes Frechette Designs**. "I had never been to the Festival before and was fascinated with the bright colours and

interesting designs of what people were wearing. I returned home and began to create Agg's Rags."

Agg's Rags is Frechette's signature line. Re-used brightly coloured fabric is cut into squares with fringes and the pieces are sewn together to make pants, skirts, scarves and tops, creating a trendy new fashion that has caught the attention of youth across Canada.

Realizing that she lacked the necessary business skills to succeed, Frechette turned to Jenny Petersen, business analyst with the Winnipeg River Brokenhead Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC). "Jenny is unbelievable," said Frechette. "I wouldn't have made it without her."

Petersen encouraged Frechette to enroll in the Self-Employment Assistance program and helped her secure a CFDC loan, enabling her to purchase a computerized embroidery machine. "Embroidery sales have increased by 60 per cent because I will do smaller contracts, where Winnipeg firms will only do larger runs," noted Frechette.

Along with managing her business, Frechette shares her knowledge by offering leather craft workshops and mentoring throughout the Eastman region. She also partners with the local high school and provides students with work experience for academic credits. Her hard work and enthusiasm has earned her several awards and a spot on CBC's *On The Road Again*.

Agnes Frechette Designs offers custom embroidery, digitizing logos, dressmaking, leather crafts and clothing alterations. For more information, call (204) 753-2936.

For information about the CFDC nearest you, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit WD's Web site at www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/index.html.

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

# Mobility is More Than Just a Dream!

Parents who have children with special needs know the frustrations of balancing a livelihood with finding the care and services they require.

For Kathy and Wil Garth and Lynn Hazen, parents of children with Down syndrome, the lack of quality transportation services available to people with disabilities and limited mobility sparked an idea.

"There was a need, but we knew nothing about starting a business and needed help. We were naïve and thought an idea would get us a bank loan," said Kathy.

Their idea lead them to **Alberta Women Entrepeneurs** who provided business counselling, assisted with the development a business plan, and provided the trio with a loan to buy a 15-passenger van.

In September 2002 the van doors opened to **D.R.E.A.M.S. Transportation Ltd.** and Calgary's disabled community welcomed them immediately. Starting with only two passengers, the company now has 60 regular clients and many others, including seniors, who require one-time service.

D.R.E.A.M.S. recognizes that clients require transportation for social, recreational and community outings — not just trips to their doctor. They serve all clients, no matter their socio-economic status; not just low-income families or those with visible disabilities. "We meet with the families of new clients, and knowing that we have children with special needs ourselves provides parents with the knowledge that we get it — we understand their needs."

The company now employs eight staff, including Wil, Kathy, Lynn and five other part-time drivers.

D.R.E.A.M.S. – Disability Recognition Employment Awareness Mobility Services – encapsulates Kathy, Wil and Lynn's philosophy that *all* people have value. Quietly this trio is changing the perception of individuals with special needs in their community and creating a place where they will be recognized for their unique skills and gifts, and valued for their capabilities.

Their social conscience means they do more than just pick up and deliver their clients. They like to think that their service is the "beginning of their client's day," and have watched them form friendships and grow as individuals.

To learn about the services offered by D.R.E.A.M.S. Transportation, call (403) 590-7433.

Alberta Women Entrepreneurs is one of four provincial Women's Enterprise Initiative offices in Western Canada financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada.



Wil Garth, D.R.E.A.M.S. Transportation's main driver, and Down syndrome client and son, Brett.

#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# Canada Business Service Centres Receive International Recognition

by Heather Waldern Hinds

The national network of 13 Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) was recognized internationally with the 2004 United Nations Public Service Award for Improvement of Public Service Results.

This award recognizes an organization's practices that increase responsiveness to citizens' needs, promotes equity in government service delivery and helps deliver timely, courteous and accessible services. There were 10 public service award recipients worldwide.

"Your outstanding achievement demonstrated excellence in serving the public interest," noted Guido Bertucci, director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "I am sure it has made a significant contribution to the improvement of public administration in your country."

The CBSC initiative is a collaborative 44 arrangement among departments and agencies, as well as provincial and territorial governments. Western Economic Diversification Canada is the federal managing partner for the network in the West. The centres provide a wide range of business information. Staff can answer questions about starting a new business or improving an existing one, how to prepare a business plan, find new markets or get ready to export. From April 2003 to March 2004, the national network had 329,000 client contacts and 4.8 million Web site visits.

The UN Public Service Awards program was established to recognize the role, professionalism and visibility of the public service, as well as best practices.





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www.wd.gc.ca



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WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

January - March 2005

# The Pulse of Western Canada's Health Industry

Western Canada enjoys a clean bill of economic health. And, if you take its pulse, you'll hear a strong heartbeat in the rapidly growing life sciences and health technologies sectors.

Canada annually invests approximately \$2 billion in health research and development and \$120 billion in health care. Life sciences and health technology products and services are being recognized for their potential to improve the quality and speed of care, as well as for their economic benefits in terms of creating new jobs in innovative industries and reducing health care costs.

Biotechnology and nanotechnology, for example, are playing a lead role in transforming the health industry sector in the West. New drug therapies and innovative

medical and imaging technologies are being developed, improvements are being made in diagnostics through remote etechnologies or telehealth, and more targeted treatments are available.

Partnerships with the research and development community, academia and all levels of government have led to leading-edge research and cutting-edge technologies being developed in the West.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) recognizes that investments in health technologies not only save lives, but leads to new industries and economic opportunities. That's why WD is making key investments to develop the health technologies sector – a few of which are featured in this issue of Access West.



### Access West

January - March 2005

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Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

### MESSAGE FROM The Honourable Stephen Owen



The Government of Canada has made substantial investments – more than \$13 billion since 1997 – to build a strong foundation in basic science and technology, create leading-edge capabilities across the country and improve the lives of Canadians.

From the development of microchips that can help diagnose cancer, to molecular capsules that deliver medicine directly to infected cells, the potential of health technologies is limitless.

That's why Western Economic Diversification Canada is investing in the development and application of path-

breaking health technologies across the West. Partnerships with industry, research institutions and all levels of government are leading to the commercialization of innovative ideas that will improve quality of life for Canadians and people everywhere. In addition, projects undertaken in our universities are creating unique learning experiences and creating high-quality jobs that will meet the ambitions of young Canadians and keep their expertise in this country.

Together we are building a stronger and healthier West, and an even stronger Canada.

Honourable Stephen Owen, P.C., Q.C., M.P. Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Sport)

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# International Summit in Winnipeg – Finding the Diversity Within

by Lee Gregg

In 1980, 250 disabled peoples asked for, and were denied, a stronger voice in the decision making process of the World Congress of Rehabilitation International, an organization made up of 3,000 rehabilitation experts and service providers. Later that year, 250 disabled persons met in Winnipeg to form their own organization, later christened **Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)**.

Established in 1981, DPI has grown into a global organization with headquarters in Winnipeg and national assemblies in 135 countries. Founded on the principal of universal inclusion of all persons with disabilities, the organization promotes human rights and the economic and social integration of disabled persons.

In September 2004, Winnipeg hosted DPI's World Summit, which focused on the artistic diversity and entrepreneurship within the global disability community. The event drew over 1,000 participants from 103 countries, including Raymond Simard, MP for St. Boniface (Manitoba) who brought greetings on behalf of the Government of Canada. Sheikha Hessa Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Thani of Qatar, Special Rapporteur on Disability with the United Nations Commission for Social Development, brought greetings on behalf of the United Nations.

Diversity Within the Disability Movement was the theme of the summit. Western Economic Diversification Canada provided support for the Global Diversity Village, a tradeshow designed to help disabled entrepreneurs find practical solutions to the challenges they face through innovation and technology.

Twenty-seven entrepreneurs from Canada, Africa and the Asia/Pacific region showcased their products and services. A three-hour tradeshow workshop was provided by Uniquely Manitoba, a product development and marketing initiative for artists, crafts persons and specialty food producers. Topics covered included: promotional materials, setting goals and objectives, booth design and tradeshow tips. Participants enjoyed the training as most of them had no international experience and it also presented a unique opportunity for participants to meet, discuss topical issues and share best practices.

DPI operates regional offices in Africa, Asia/Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, with 80 per cent of them located in developing countries. For information on DPI, call (204) 287-8010 or visit their Web site at: www.dpi.org/. •



#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

### **Urban Renewal..**



World Urban Forum 2004 – (L to R) WD Minister Stephen Owen, UN-HABITAT Executive Director Anna Tabaijuka and Labour and Housing Minister Joe Fontana.

Communities around the world are struggling to address urban issues. Since 1950, people have migrated from rural homes in record numbers and today nearly 50 per cent of the world's population lives in urban centres. By 2030, that number is expected to reach 60 per cent. This dramatic shift in population density has created a range of issues from water, sanitation and shelter, to cultural preservation, decentralization of authority and urban governance, to urban poverty and health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Building sustainable communities is a key priority of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). While western Canadian urban centres are concerned about maintaining the necessary infrastructure to support these growing numbers, rural centres are struggling with population decline and youth out-migration. Both cities and towns are key to Canada's social goals and our economic competitiveness, and are the front lines in building a better quality of life for Canadians.

To address key issues like urban renewal in Western Canada, WD is taking a partnership approach. One example of an innovative solution to urban development challenges is the Vancouver Agreement, which recently won the country's highest award in public service innovation at the Institute for Public Administration of Canada's 2004 conference.

Since the agreement was signed in March 2000, WD has played an integral role in working with all levels of government, local businesses, the private sector, academia, local residents. the First Nations community and nonprofit organizations in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. WD's involvement in this urban development partnership, aimed at revitalizing one of Canada's most impoverished downtown neighbourhoods, has led to innovative projects that are improving the quality of life of residents and businesses in the community.

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

## Global Challenge

WD Minister Stephen Owen recently attended World Urban Forum 2004 in Barcelona, Spain. With 5,000 registered participants, the Forum provided an ideal platform to discuss and exchange ideas, learn from the international community and showcase Canada's domestic and international sustainable urbanization policies and programs, such as the Vancouver Agreement.

The World Urban Forum is held every two years to bring together governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other experts in an informal setting to discuss urban issues and the challenges facing communities around the globe. World Urban Forum 2006 will be held in Vancouver, B.C., June 19-23, 2006.

"World Urban Forum 2006 is an opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas, and to demonstrate Canada's leadership in sustainable development," indicated Minister Owen. "WD's innovative urban partnerships, and our investments in areas such as innovative technologies and research labs, are examples of what Canada can contribute to international efforts on urbanization and human settlements."

Minister Owen emphasized that Canada is developing significant strength in environmental technologies, which promise to provide concrete solutions to challenges faced by all urbanizing nations. At the heart of the environmental technology movement is

the goal to reduce the negative impact of human settlements on the environment through clean energy, sustainable construction, water treatment, brownfield remediation and air quality management.

World Urban Forum 2006 will engage citizens and key stakeholder groups on urban policy issues and start to develop models that can be used to address urbanization issues in cities around the globe. Delegates will be able to learn first hand from those living in some of the most challenging human settlement environments in the world.

The Forum also provides an opportunity for westerners and other Canadians to share best practices and exchange ideas and success stories about projects like the Vancouver Agreement. WD can also share how it is helping to coordinate the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in major cities across the West.

In preparation for the 2006 Forum, WD is involved in the Vancouver Working Group, a diverse group of senior level representatives from the private and public sectors, which is providing input and expert advice to the Government of Canada.

For more information about the work of UN-HABITAT and the World Urban Forum, visit www.unhabitat.org/. For information about World Urban Forum 2006, visit www.wd.gc.ca/ced/wuf/default\_e.asp. •

In 1976, Canada helped bring urban issues to the forefront of international awareness by hosting HABITAT I — the historic first United Nations (UN) conference on human settlements, held in Vancouver. The conference led to a UN resolution that created the United Nations' **Human Settlements** Program (UN-HABITAT). The agency, based in Nairobi, Kenya, deals with human settlements issues and established the World Urban Forum initiative.

# **Turning Health Spending Into Commercial Success**

by Jason Brisbois
Chief Economist, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

Every year governments in Canada spend about \$120 billion providing health care services to Canadians and \$2 billion on health research. The result is Canada enjoys one of the best health care systems in the world. But are we really getting the best return on our health care investment? Can our spending on health care and health research also generate new industries, new jobs and economic growth?

In 2001, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) supported Dr. Henry Friesen – now chairman of Genome Canada – and a task force consisting of leaders in health research, health care delivery, industry and investment from across the West to find out.

Dr. Friesen's consultations concluded that there is potential for health related research to become an economic driver for Western Canada. As a result, WD invested \$2 million toward the creation of the Canada West Health Innovation Council (CWHIC), which was formed with a mandate to find ways to build a vibrant, Canadian health science industry based on commercializing health discoveries.

CWHIC's first step was to identify areas of health research that hold the best potential for producing commercially viable products and services. Through extensive research and consultations, three promising areas in Western Canada were identified: medical devices and imaging, functional foods and natural health products, and infectious diseases and immunology.

Next, business plans were developed to guide these sectors to commercial success by turning ideas into marketable products and services. In the process, it became clear that the medical devices and imaging, and functional foods and natural health products sectors are in the best position to generate commercial successes in the near term.

Today, CWHIC and WD are evaluating partnership options for moving forward on a number of ideas and opportunities generated by the work to date. To be effective, participation and financial support will be required from a range of organizations – from heath research and health care institutions, to universities, industry, government and communities.

Much remains to be done, but CWHIC's work has put Western Canada in a position to lever WD spending on health research into a legacy of successful commercialization stories.

For more information, visit www.wd.gc.ca/innovation.

# ACCESS

### **ALBERTA**

January - March 2005

# World Trade Centre Edmonton Opens Its Doors to Global Business

Edmonton added another page to its history books when the World Trade Centre Edmonton (WTCE) opened its doors to global business on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

The new centre allowed the **Edmonton Chamber of Commerce** to expand its business support services to entrepreneurs interested in taking steps towards global commerce. Northern Alberta business travellers can access the facility by virtue of membership in their local chamber of commerce, making the WTCE a vital component in the continuing process of building strong relationships between Edmonton and business communities in the North.

"The pace of the global economy is set by new technologies, new start-ups and most of all, by the creativity and ingenuity of businesses of all sizes — many of which will access the services offered at the World Trade Centre Edmonton," commented Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan at the official opening.

The renovated historical former CIBC building, located at 9990 Jasper Avenue, is now home to the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, Edmonton Tourism and an Edmonton Airports passenger, baggage and Sky Shuttle facility. The sixth floor World Trade Centre includes high-tech meeting and conference rooms, Internet-connected computers and other services for visiting users.



WCTE joins the world's most influential trading team – the World Trade Centers Association, a global non-profit network of 288 centres located in 98 countries around the world.

Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Province of Alberta each contributed \$3.5 million toward building renovations in October 2003.

### Drink Your Milk...and Don't

As children we often heard "drink your milk" and "don't forget to take your vitamins." Teachers explained that calcium, particularly in milk, helps to make growing bones healthy and strong. Later in life, women learn that calcium helps prevent osteoporosis after menopause.

What most people don't know about are the regulations surrounding all processed foods. Dairy producers, for example, must add vitamins A and D to liquid milk.

These vitamins are necessary for the normal development and maintenance of the human body. Health Canada requires vitamins A and D to be added to milk to ensure that we receive adequate amounts to stay healthy, but at a level safe for human consumption.

As a result, dairy producers have mandatory testing requirements that currently take from 10 to 14 business days to get back from an outside lab, at a cost of up to \$350 per test.

Two years ago, an Edmonton company recognized the need for an alternative to this costly and time-consuming analysis of these vitamins.

SciMed Laboratories Inc. developed a new method that uses a fat extraction process and monoclonal (composed of cells derived from a single cell) antibodies. Their two patented, user-friendly diagnostic kits are capable of performing on-site analysis of vitamins A and D in milk samples in just two hours. The new kits significantly reduce the analysis time and give processors the opportunity to correct vitamin levels if necessary, as well as reduce the cost of performing mandatory food industry tests by up to two-thirds.

Dr. Rajan Gupta, president and CEO of SciMed, began the company in 1999 as a service-providing lab. As they moved into research and development, the need to retain staff with the right skills was obvious, and Dr. Gupta contacted Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). WD's **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program** helped the biotechnology firm hire a recent University of Alberta graduate.

"The First Jobs program allowed our company to hire a graduate as part of a team of three scientists that were instrumental in commercializing the diagnostic kits for the testing of fortified milk products," indicated Dr. Gupta.

SciMed recognized the impressive market potential – over \$1.3 billion in North America alone – for VitaKit A and VitaKit D, but required equity investment to make the leap from the developmental stage to commercialization.



## orget to Take Your Vitamins

The annual Greater Edmonton VenturePrize Business Plan Competition provided the company with an opportunity to take their idea and transfer it into a solid plan for growth. The grand prize winner receives \$25,000 cash, \$25,000 in-kind business services and \$50,000 in-kind research and development services from the Alberta Research Council.

VenturePrize is lead by the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) in partnership with an impressive list of industry, academic and government partners, including WD. A panel of business and financing professionals evaluates the business plans, looking for business ideas that are high-growth and feasible.

In 2004, SciMed Laboratories won this honour. Dr. Gupta said, "I think this is a stepping stone to something more." 'More' meaning attracting the capital they need to go the next step and begin marketing the VitaKits in North America.

Dr. Gupta reports that the company has successfully secured a second round of financing. The company is also negotiating with a group of local investors, and a number of venture capital firms in Canada and the U.S. have also expressed strong interest in the technologies being developed by SciMed.

SciMed Laboratories' hard work has paid off. The VitaKits went into production in September 2004. The company is now exploring the best method of marketing the technology, which should be available in early 2005.

While the new VitaKits are the company's primary product line, SciMed Laboratories also works in the area of nutritional food



analysis and has products in the pipeline for the nanotechnology sector that has applications in both the agri-food and clinical industries.

For more information about SciMed Laboratories, call (780) 702-1509 or visit their Web site at: www.scimedlab.com.

For more information about programs and services available for Western Economic Diversification Canada for technology and commercialization projects, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit www.wd.gc.ca.

### Recognizing Alberta's Environmental Stewards

Pristine lakes and wandering rivers. Majestic mountains and rolling hills. Waving fields of golden grain. Wide open prairie skies. If you close your eyes, you can imagine these beautiful scenes around Alberta... and you have probably enjoyed many of them yourself.

Safeguarding this precious environment – today and for generations to come – is one of our greatest responsibilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is also important to recognize the outstanding initiative and leadership demonstrated by Albertans who have a keen sense of this responsibility.

The Alberta Emerald Foundation for Environmental Excellence established the **Emerald Awards** in 1991 to recognize positive achievements affecting the environment in our province, in hopes that such recognition would sustain efforts and encourage similar activities.

Nominations for these awards are accepted year round, but the deadline for the 2005 awards is February 28th. There are 11 categories that range from individual commitment to environmental achievements by a community group, education to research and innovation, and leadership by a small or large business, to name to just a few.

Applications are judged on the basis of:

- commitment to preservation, protection, enhancement or sustainability of the environment; and
- positive, tangible and long-term impact on: quality of air, water or land; preservation of biological diversity; climate change/greenhouse gases; and public or corporate attitudes toward the environment.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Emerald Awards will be held at the EPCOR Centre in Calgary on June 7, 2005.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is proud to be a Sustaining Patron of the Foundation, which promotes environmental stewardship and sustainable development through stimulating public awareness of environmental progress and recognizing best practices in Alberta.

WD recognizes that the development and commercialization of new environmental technologies is playing an increasingly important role in creating economic growth in the West and helping Canada achieve its climate change commitments.

EMERALD AWARDS

For more information about the Emerald Awards and how to submit a nomination, visit www.emeraldawards.com.\*

### Success Takes Flight at SAIT

by Larry Lalonde SAIT

Aviation maintenance training is being taken to new heights at SAIT with the opening of the Art Smith Aero Centre for Training and Technology.

Located in the heart of Calgary's aviation industry at the Calgary International Airport, the new \$22 million facility was built to meet the training requirements for the aerospace industry...an industry where 40 to 60 per cent of the current maintenance personnel are expected to retire by 2016.

Perhaps the most important and distinguishing element of the facility is its hangar that is large enough to accommodate a Next-Generation Boeing

737-700 aircraft. And, with the recent donation of a Boeing 737-200 aircraft from WestJet, SAIT's new training centre is the only post-secondary aircraft maintenance training facility in Canada with a hangar and one of only two Canadian institutions that can offer aircraft maintenance training on large commercial aircraft that are widely used throughout the world.

The building design was influenced by the aviation instructional staff at SAIT, and encompasses state-of-the-art teaching facilities and an adaptable layout. Occupying 17 acres of land, the 106,000 sq. ft. Art Smith Aero Centre includes a 21,528 sq. ft. hangar with a 43 foot ceiling height, 11 classrooms and 13 specialty labs.

Current programs, which began in September 2004, include aircraft maintenance engineers technology, aircraft structures technician and avionics technology.



Inside view of SAIT's new Art Smith Aero Centre hangar containing a Boeing 737-200 and other training aircraft.

Photo courtesy of Gary Watson, SAIT.

Complemented with one of the best-equipped fleets of aviation training aircraft in North America, there is no limit to the aviation programs that can be provided at the Art Smith Aero Centre. Future programs such as aircraft interior technician, aircraft parts technician and aircraft mechanical components technician are being planned. As well, aviation continuing education courses, aviation pre-employment programs and corporate partner-ship training are being developed.

Western Economic Diversification Canada, along with the Government of Alberta and the Calgary Airport Authority, provided financial support for the centre.

For more information about SAIT's Art Smith Aero Centre for Training and Technology, call John Myers, manager of business development and operations for the Art Smith Aero Centre, at (403) 210-4266, or visit www.sait.ca/aerocentre.



#### BLE COMMUNITIES

# **Providing the Tools for Sigh**

by Tamnia Selig
WORKink Alberta

Watching television. Listening to laughter. Talking to our friends. Sight, hearing, speech and mobility – these are basic skills we enjoy that enable us to enjoy life...and earn a paycheque.

For a person with a disability looking for employment, the task is often daunting. But with access to new technologies, persons with disabilities are now able to participate in employment training to update their skills and enter or re-enter the workforce.

Iris Saunders, executive director of **EmployAbilities Society of Alberta** in Edmonton says, "Assistive technology supports



are providing more opportunities for persons with disabilities to enter the workforce and participate in the community than ever before."

The development of the **Assistive Technology Resource Centre** has allowed EmployAbilities to continue their efforts to assist clients by providing access to a variety of technologies they would otherwise be unable to afford. Working with WORK*ink* Alberta and Community Futures Development Corporations throughout rural Alberta, individuals can try out the equipment to decide if it could be useful for themselves, their office or their organization.

Patrick McCreight had difficulty learning computer skills in a traditional classroom setting using standard equipment. As a young man, McCreight had a stroke that left him with limited mobility, loss of vision in one eye and with a speech impairment.

McCreight has thrived in EmployAbilities' encouraging environment thanks to the assistive technology supports. He now uses a space-saver keyboard that he operates successfully using one hand, and has improved his typing skills with a typing tutor program for single-handed users. McCreight is looking to gain employment with his former employer, Capital Health, with a shift from rehabilitation worker to a more administrative role.

Kathleen Lassell had no idea she had a hearing impairment—she didn't know she was missing half of everything! Lassell was in her forties before her sister, a nurse, pointed out that she was answering questions inappropriately. The first time she used a hearing aid was the first time she heard the birds sing, and using the FM listening device at EmployAbilities

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

## Sound, Mobility and Success

has made learning a pleasure, says Lassell, who now uses two hearing aids. "I am suddenly able to hear everything the instructor is saying."

Although Lassell is a competent secretary, she knows that her disability restricts her from answering telephones in the workplace. She believes bookkeeping and accounting is what she would like to pursue, and EmployAbilities is assisting her to access funding and select the right courses.

Over 150 disabled individuals have utilized the services of the resource centre since February 2004, and 17 Edmonton area businesses have hired disabled employees, who with the help of assistive technologies, are making an impact in their businesses.

EmployAbilities developed the resource centre and purchased state-of-the-art hardware and software devices for use by individuals with vision or hearing impairments and physical or learning disabilities with support from Western Economic Diversification Canada and fundraising activities.

They have developed user-friendly guides that are written in basic English and use graphics, which has resulted in clients finding each product easier to learn. Clients utilize equipment and software including: ZoomText/Screenreader Software for those with visual impairments; single-handed keyboards; and Easy Listener Personal FM System and AudiSee Visual FM System for persons with hearing impairments. Wynn Wizard and Kurzweil 3000 are software programs used by those with learning disabilities. And, the Language Master SE Talking Dictionary helps those who are challenged by blindness, visual or speech impairments, learning disabilities or dyslexia.



The EmployAbilities Society of Alberta has been offering employment support for persons with disabilities in the Edmonton region for over 30 years. It provides a wide range of services, including working in partnership with WORK*ink* Alberta to maintain a one-stop resource for employers who are interested in hiring persons with disabilities, a six-month full-time skills development program and operation of the Partners Call Centre.

For more information about the assistive technology available or other programs and services offered by EmployAbilities, call 1-800-785-6539 or visit www.employabilities.ab.ca.

# New Business Services Available for Calgary Area Entrepreneurs

by Kristi Rosko Calgary Business Information Centre

The Calgary Business Information Centre (CBIC) celebrated the launch of new advisory and business services to assist local entrepreneurs in starting and expanding their businesses in September 2004.

As small and medium-sized businesses grow and expand, their need for business knowledge and support increases. The

not-for-profit organization recognized this need and introduced more indepth business services and resources, as well as senior business and trade advisory services.

The new advisory services help entrepreneurs with business plans and operations, including exporting and market development — free of charge. In addition, CBIC offers affordable consulting services, via partnerships with various service

providers, in areas such as legal or accounting needs.

"We recognized that there were gaps related to business planning and development," commented Executive Director Kristi Rosko. "The advising services we offer help address these gaps by providing clients with guidance to meet their individual needs.

"We realized that to help businesses be successful, not only do we need to provide them with the information to start up their venture, but also the resources they need to grow," added Rosko. CBIC also added short, practical business seminars to its services and launched its revised Web site that offers direct access to more business resources and tools. As well, the centre's new Business Service Provider's Directory helps entrepreneurs access other organizations that provide additional business support.



The staff of the Calgary Business Information Centre help Calgary area entrepreneurs with a wealth of information, programs and services.

The centre opened in 1996 with a mandate to assist SMEs in the Calgary region to succeed. CBIC helps over 20,000 people annually to reach their goal of small business ownership through services that include: oneon-one business guidance and advisory services with small business experts, a fully equipped onsite small business reference library, workshops and seminars, networking events. referral services to

government and other small business service providers, and professional consulting services.

CBIC is a joint initiative supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Alberta Economic Development and Calgary Economic Development. The centre is a member of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network.

For more information about the services offered by CBIC, call (403) 221-7800 or visit www.calgary-smallbusiness.com.

# Arts and Culture, Say Hello to Science and Technology!

Nestled among the majestic Canadian Rockies in Banff, Alberta, is a facility where artists and scientists share the same spirit of creativity and innovation. **The Banff Centre** strongly believes that the blend of arts and culture with science and technology will produce the new media of the future.

The Banff New Media Institute (BNMI), a program of the Centre, is a world-class research and content innovation facility that has been successfully supporting the new media industry in Canada since 1990. In the Spring 2004, it launched the *Accelerator*, a fast-track incubation program for promising new media content and technologies companies in Western Canada that will help their chances for success.

New media companies excel in entertainment software, web development and Internet advertising. Most companies tend to be micro-sized, consisting of only one to five employees.

As today's wireless industry calls for fast-track development of applications, content and services, new media companies have excellent opportunities for accelerated growth. The BNMI will help creators gain access to the business support, knowledge and networks needed to take their ideas to the next level.

The Accelerator initiative provides fledgling new media companies with creative counselling, production planning, legal support, as well as training in areas such as marketing, budgeting and financing. This new tool will also help develop clusters of small businesses and create alliances that can bid on larger and more complex projects.

Not only will new media companies benefit from access to leading-edge technologies, they will also develop business knowledge and professional networks through



extensive workshops, forums and business incubation/

The Accelerator supports the creation of products that are a result of research undertaken at BNMI and creates a system where applied research challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises can be addressed by new media researchers at the Institute.

residencies.

Western Economic Diversification Canada provided the Banff New Media Institute with support to establish the Accelerator, which will help position Canada as a leader in new media technologies.

For more information about the BNMI or other programs at The Banff Centre, call (403) 762-6100 or visit www.banffcentre.ca.

# A New Tool for Faster Cancer Detection



Dr. Pilarski (2nd from left) examines a new microfluidic research tool with a team of colleagues and students in a University of Alberta Electrical Engineering laboratory.

Anyone who has ever waited for medical test results can relate to the anguish it causes. When the threat of cancer looms, fear and stress not only affect the patient, but also their family.

Through the wonders of science, patients may soon walk into their doctor's office, give a few drops of blood and get a diagnosis within minutes. For the medical world, these quick test results will not only gain precious time for patient treatment, but also offer significant savings as testing can be done at a fraction of the cost of current methods.

Engineers, geneticists, physicians and medical researchers are pooling their leading-edge discoveries in micro/nanotechnology and medicine to develop a miniaturized diagnostic testing device for cancer. The handheld device will use microfluidics chips (glass or plastic chips that are embedded with micron-width channels in which fluids

thousands of times smaller than a droplet can travel) to detect four variations of the disease: multiple myeloma, follicular lymphoma, colorectal cancer and susceptibility to breast cancer. The universities of Alberta and Calgary and the Alberta Cancer Board are providing key researchers and support for this unique collaboration known as the Alberta Cancer Diagnostic Consortium.

Dr. Linda Pilarski, oncologist and professor at the University of Alberta, is the scientific leader for this project. She expects this tool will be available to health practitioners within three to five years.

The new device will have the potential to quickly determine the genetic properties of a specific cancer right in the doctor's office at the time of diagnosis. Treatment can be tailored to most effectively target specific characteristics of the disease in each individual patient. It also means that as the disease changes over time, these changes can be identified and the therapy quickly adapted to target more aggressive cancer cells.

"We hope this will lead to customized, more effective treatment options for cancer patients," said Dr. Pilarski.

Western Economic Diversification Canada recently invested \$2.5 million toward the development of the prototype that will eventually lead to commercialization of this innovative device.

For more information, contact Dr. Pilarski at (780) 432-8925.◆

## **Blending Life with Art**

by Lee Gregg

It's not everyone who can boast that when they enter a classroom they really shock and surprise the kids. Meet Wendy Smith, certified prosthetist and owner of LifeArt Prosthetics Inc. "I would bring in clients to help teach children about amputees," explained Smith. "They brought new meaning to show and tell."

Over the last 20 years, Smith has evaluated, designed, fabricated and fitted artificial limbs. "I'm sure I fit thousands," said Smith, "but I couldn't do much for patients who needed hand and finger prosthetics and it really bothered me."

Undaunted, Smith taught herself how to design and build finger joints and hands, incorporating colour for a more natural look.

In 2002, Smith expanded into making custom breast prostheses and launched her *Breast Dressed Program*. "Companies mass-produce gel-filled bags for about \$400, but they are heavy and do not fit women correctly," noted Smith. Her custom-fit prosthesis costs approximately \$600, is lighter and blends into the body for a more natural look. "There is a prosthetist in Toronto who charges \$4,000 for a breast prosthesis, but I wanted to make it affordable. I'm not going to take advantage of women who have already gone through so much."



With 20 years experience, Wendy Smith's custom-built silicone body restorations have put her in demand across Canada.

The Winnipeg entrepreneur turned to the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba (WEC) for assistance in expanding her Breast Dressed Program. "I went down with a skeleton business plan. They helped me pull it all together, apply for the loan and make it all happen. They were very encouraging and provided support all the way along."

Smith credits a big part of her success to her husband. "I could not do what I do without his total support. Balancing my work and family needs is an important and challenging part of my life."

"LifeArt is a research-oriented

business," explained Smith. "I think it's important to always be coming up with new and better ways to fit prosthetics." Most school children would agree she has succeeded.

For information on LifeArt Prosthetics, call (204) 334-1206 or visit www.lifeart.ca.

WEC is financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For information, visit www.wecm.ca.\*

# **Devices Created to Improve Life** for People with Disabilities

by Jillian Glover



The "Jouse," developed by the Nell Squire Foundation, is a mouth-operated computer mouse that works with sips and puffs instead of clicks to assist people with disabilities to use a computer.

When Neil Squire became a paraplegic and lost his ability to speak as a result of a car accident, Bill Cameron became determined to improve his relative's life and the lives of others with severe physical disabilities.

Cameron brought a teletype machine into a Vancouver, B.C., hospital room, allowing Squire to find his voice again by converting his sips and puffs through a straw into Morse Code. Those working with Squire were inspired by the potential that technology could harness for people with disabilities. The team of volunteers, including electrical engineers and occupational therapists, continued to grow. When Squire died unexpectedly in 1984, Cameron created the **Neil Squire Foundation**.

The Foundation is now a national non-profit organization committed to providing education, technology and career

development for people with physical disabilities. Its research and development group studies and creates enabling technology – advanced devices, technologies and products – that are improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. To date, more than 5,000 people have benefited from the leading-edge assistive technology and innovative programs and services developed by the Foundation.

One initiative being developed by the Foundation is a brainto-machine interface. A switch is activated by brain signals measured directly from the scalp, allowing an individual with a severe physical disability to control devices such as assistive appliances, computers and neural prostheses.

"The Brain Interface Project is producing encouraging results from people with high-level spinal cord injuries," says Executive Director Dr. Gary Birch. "We hope to eventually introduce it into the health care system and dramatically enhance the lives of those living with physical disabilities."

Western Economic Diversification Canada recently provided the Foundation with support to develop a strategic business plan for its Centre for Excellence in Enabling Technologies. This support will enhance funding and networking opportunities for the Centre and explore the marketability of enabling technologies.

"We have key science and business community members interested in providing guidance on how to capitalize on our knowledge," says Dr. Birch. "Western Economic Diversification Canada has helped us move forward towards commercializing our technologies."

For more information about the products being development by the Foundation, call (604) 473-9363 or visit www.neilsquire.ca.

### VIDO's Livestock Vaccines Lead to Healthier Canadians

by Cameron Zimmer

Poultry producers in the Fraser Valley were forced to re-examine food safety when they were ordered to slaughter 19 million chickens, turkeys and ducks last April in an effort to contain an outbreak of avian influenza.

With producers in B.C. and around the world focused more than ever on food safety, Dr. Brenda Allan from the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is working on a vaccine for Campylobacter jejuni, another diseasecausing pathogen spread by poultry.

Although unrelated to avian flu, the bacteria have the same potential to infect an entire flock without causing any symptoms. This stealth has Dr. Allan and other VIDO researchers asking how to tackle it and other chicken and cattle pathogens before they leave their host.

"There is a great deal to know about how Campylobacter interacts with the host," says Dr. Allan. "Why does it make humans sick while chickens don't show any signs of infection?"

Dr. Allan's question reflects the spirit of VIDO's food safety program, which focuses on protecting people through products for use in animals.

"More and more often we are seeing animal diseases that are easily transmittable to humans," says VIDO's Director Dr. Lorne Babiuk. "We have a 30-year history of studying animal diseases, so we are well-prepared to study emerging human diseases that originate in animals."

According to Dr. Babiuk, every year there are 70 million cases of illness in North America caused by food-andwater-borne pathogens, and there are currently no effective ways to control these in animals.

VIDO made the leap from animal research to human health when Associate Director Dr. Andy Potter worked with a University of British Columbia scientist to develop a vaccine for cattle against a strain of E. coli.

VIDO's efforts were boosted by a \$19 million expansion that received \$3.14 million from Western Economic Diversification Canada. It also received \$4 million from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and Bioniche Life Sciences Inc. for two new research chairs to increase its food safety research capacity.

With its focus on helping both animals and humans, VIDO is working hard so our immune systems won't have to.

Contact VIDO at (306) 966-7465 or visit www.vido.org.◆



examines a plate for Campylobacter bacteria — a common cause of food poisoning — with technician Carla Reimer.

#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

If undeliverable please return to:

Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 1500, Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5J 4H7

# Western Innovators Meet in Calgary

Western Canada enjoys a rich resource base in oil and gas, forests, agriculture, fishing and mining. But looking towards INNO WEST2004

discussion about the importance of collaboration and partnerships in building capacity and transferring

the future, this commodity-based economy and the wealth it has provided are being threatened by common issues – trade barriers, decline in resource production and changing weather patterns, to name just a few.

To stay successful in the global marketplace, the western provinces are moving from commodity-based to innovation-based economies. Understanding the path to this new knowledge intensive and diversified economy brought together over 250 individuals from business, academia and government in Western Canada.

InnoWest 2004, the first annual western Canadian innovation conference, was recently held in Calgary. It provided a forum for the West's innovation community to explore how successful innovation can create wealth and long-term business competitiveness, and included

and sharing knowledge.

Participants were able to collaborate in small group workshops to tackle real industry problems. Forums allowed for networking, review of the latest developments, discussions on common problems and possible solutions, and specific industry recommendations to take forward for action.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is a catalyst for the advancement of new technologies in Western Canada that lead to the commercialization of groundbreaking ideas and create new jobs in innovative industries. WD was proud to support InnoWest 2004.

For more information about InnoWest 2004, including summaries of the problems identified during workshops and their proposed solutions, visit www.innowest.com.



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WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

April - June 2005

## All the World's a Stage



by Barb Steele

William Shakespeare wrote, *All the world's a stage*. How true in today's global economy. Whether you create international business opportunities the old fashioned way — through travel and meetings abroad — or through the World Wide Web, any business can take the world stage with proper planning for export success.

Exporting can bring significant benefits, but it can also place demands on companies they may or may not be prepared to meet. Here are 10 steps to export success:

- 1. Evaluate your organizational and product readiness for exporting.
- 2. Concentrate on one or two markets that offer the best potential.
- 3. Choose an effective market entry strategy to get your goods into and distributed in a foreign market(s).

- 4. Set a realistic product price that yields an acceptable profit.
- 5. Become familiar with options for export financing transactions.
- 6. Promoting your product or service in foreign markets may include modifications to packaging, name or corporate image, and advertising.
- 7. Check with an international freight forwarder on how to get your product or service to market.
- 8. Prepare an export plan planning and preparation are essential!
- Review and revise the export plan to correct or improve any shortcomings.
- 10.Understand the terminology of exporting.

This snapshot of advice from International Trade Canada is just one example of a wide range of Government of Canada resources available to Canadian companies looking to enter the global spotlight. For more information, visit www.wd.gc.ca/export.\*





### Access West

April - June 2005

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

# MESSAGE FROM The Honourable Stephen Owen



Canada is a trading nation. In 2003, Canada exported over \$450 billion in goods and services, or nearly 38 per cent of its GDP.

But while exporting is a major economic driver, western Canadian exports tend to be natural resource commodities, making the region far more vulnerable to global market fluctuations. As we've seen with ongoing challenges linked to softwood lumber and BSE, access to world markets is critical.

Western Economic Diversification Canada is working with the provinces,

International Trade Canada and other federal departments to expand global trade and investment opportunities for the region. And, our partners in the Western Canada Business Service Network are working with entrepreneurs to explore their exporting potential with business services and advice.

Working together, we're building a stronger West — and a stronger Canada.

Honourable Stephen Owen, P.C., Q.C., M.P. Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Sport)

# New Survey Looks at Western Canadian Small Business and Export Markets

by Edward J. Chambers
Western Centre for Economic Research, University of Alberta

The Western Centre for Economic Research (WCER) and Western Economic Diversification Canada recently released Western Canada's Small Business Markets: A Survey of Selling, a study that identifies the geographic markets where small western Canadian firms sell their products.

The study, undertaken by the WCER at the University of Alberta, sampled approximately 700 small enterprises in the manufacturing, information technology, business services and cultural industries sectors across the four western provinces. Firms in these sectors have products that can be sold nationally and internationally. By finding buyers far beyond their own backyard, they build the community's export base and promote economic development.

The study fills an important gap in knowledge about the relative importance of the dynamic markets where small business sells. The authors pointed to the availability of considerable research into the financing and other operational requirements of small business in the West, but the absence of knowledge about the customers whose demands sustain the business. Survey results revealed that these sectors of small business continue to rely significantly on customer links in local markets. At the same time, more than one-half of the firms surveyed sold their products to customers across Canada and two-fifths had international customers, mostly in the U.S.

Successful selling outside the local community is closely related to both initial planning and experience.

Respondents who included international marketing as part of their business plans turned out to be better performers in these markets.

The survey revealed two specific illustrations of the crucial role played by experience in expanding the markets of small business. First, when small business owners have foreign work experience, the likelihood of exporting is substantially increased. Second, experience as an exporter significantly lowers the perceived barriers to selling in national and international markets, and more intensive involvement with exporting lowers these perceptions even more so. Those who do and those who don't have experience view these barriers very differently.

For a copy of the study or to request the survey data, visit the Western Centre for Economic Research Web site at: www.bus.ualberta.ca/wcer.

Western Economic Diversification Canada financially supported this report, which helps to create a better understanding of the western Canadian economy and the factors that influence its growth and development.

## Partnership is Key to Trad

by Neil Kirkpatrick Senior Economic Policy Analyst, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

The need for an enhanced focus on international business development and a coordinated approach to trade, investment and innovation has been highlighted in recent federal budgets. Western provinces have also identified the need for a stronger federal role in support of international business development and enhanced federal-provincial coordination.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) agreed and identified trade and investment as a strategic priority. The department is committed to providing enhanced support for international business development in the West through a trade and investment strategy that includes:

- closer collaboration with the western provinces, International Trade Canada, trade commissioners and other federal partners, and effectively partnering with provincial Trade Teams in the West;
- readiness and export advisory information services through WD's Western Canada Business Service Network;
- strategic participation in trade missions and trade-related initiatives;
- investment attraction and retention initiatives that support priority sectors, such as: fuel cells, ocean industries, health technologies, medical devices, nonotechnology, wireless, agricultural bio-tech, synchrotron, composite materials, etc.;
- targeted western research on trade and foreign direct investment; and
- targeted analysis and advocacy related to key trade policy developments in the WTO and NAFTA where appropriate.

Canada's trade relationship with the U.S. is by far the largest and most dynamic in the world (valued at \$1.8 billion per day in 2003). The Government of Canada recognized the need to enhance Canada's presence across the U.S. to expand fair and secure trade and to advance innovation in the Canadian economy through science and technology, strategic alliances and investments. Through a \$118 million investment over five years, the United States Enhanced Representation Initiative (ERI) will help do just that.

Its objectives are to enhance Canadian representation in the U.S. through:

- nine new and expanded Canadian offices, six in the western U.S.;
- adding new Honourary Consuls in major markets currently not served by Consulates;
- enhanced partnerships among key federal government departments and greater involvement of the provinces; and
- sustained, targeted and coordinated advocacy and business development efforts.

Together, Foreign Affairs Canada, International Trade Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Economic Development – Quebec, the National Research Council and Western Economic Diversification Canada work closely with other federal departments and provincial governments to ensure that trade and investment priorities are reflected in the ERI.

### nd Investment in the West

In support of the ERI, WD launched the Western Canada Technology Capabilities Study Tour, held October 24-28, 2004. Canadian trade commissioners and business development officers from U.S. posts visited Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon and Winnipeg to learn about western technologies and how to promote them in the U.S. Local academics and business and economic development professionals presented Canadian capabilities, and trade commissioners exchanged information about opportunities for Canada in a variety of western U.S. markets.

The tour was very successful in providing
Canadian trade commissioners with a
broader understanding of western
Canadian capabilities and broadening
understanding within WD about how
to work effectively with trade
commissioners and local International
Trade Canada representatives in
support of international business
development opportunities.

The tour also looked at how to develop and implement other ERI projects that support western priorities. A priority for 2005-06 will be to look at initiating specific projects by trade commissioners and WD together with provincial and federal partners in the West.

WD recently sponsored the first annual Federal Government Procurement Conference of the Americas in Vancouver, November 15-17, 2004, hosted by the Canadian Commercial Corporation and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). The conference provided a forum on government procurement practices in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, and provided suppliers

with information about how to sell to these governments.

WD is also examining opportunities to work with the Asia Pacific Foundation, International Trade Canada and other federal and provincial partners to support the development of emerging markets in Asia Pacific — China in particular.

China's economy has grown over 40 per cent since 2000, making it the seventh largest world economy and Canada's second largest trading partner. Open markets, economic reforms and an increasingly powerful industrial infrastructure is driving greater integration with other Asian economies — all elements that make China an attractive market for western Canadian companies in sectors such as natural resources, transportation, agri-food, information and communication technologies, biotechnology, aerospace and tourism.

Visit www.canadianembassy.org/sandtnews/ SpecialNov2004-en.asp for more information about the ERI Study Tour and a special Study Tour edition of *S&T News*, a newsletter produced by the Canadian Embassy in Washington.

For more information about the 2004 procurement conference, visit www.fgpca2004.com. The 2005 conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia.

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

## **Defining the Social Economy**

by Fiona Salkie Senior Policy Analyst, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

What do a community-owned construction business that provides training and employment opportunities for First Nations and Métis people in northern Saskatchewan, a non-profit catering business in Edmonton that integrates a training program for people with a chronic and persistent mental illness, and a socially responsible property management company in Vancouver have in common? They are all part of the social economy.

The *social economy* is a grassroots, entrepreneurial sector based on democratic values that seek to enhance the social, economic and environmental conditions of communities, often with a focus on their disadvantaged members. Common objectives include: reducing poverty, providing affordable housing, and addressing environmental concerns through social, cultural, educational, employment and lifestyle activities.

Social economy organizations may be co-operatives, foundations, credit unions, non-profit organizations, charities and social enterprises. They are not part of the private sector or government, but form a third sector.

A social economy enterprise operates like a business, produces goods and services for the market, but manages its operations and redirects its surpluses in pursuit of social and environmental goals.

Prime Minister Martin announced support for the social economy in February 2004. He said the Government of

Canada was going to get behind "the efforts of the people who are applying entrepreneurial creativity, not for profit, but rather to enhance the social and environmental conditions in our communities right across Canada."

The federal government announced four initiatives aimed at the social economy in the 2004 budget, including:

- improved access by social economy organizations to federal programs and services for business;
- a new program to support capacity-building in community and social economy organizations;
- new financing programs to provide capital to social enterprises; and
- support for research.

With the exception of the research initiative, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Industry Canada and other regional development agencies have been given the responsibility for designing and implementing these initiatives.

WD recently consulted with social economy organizations across Western Canada to learn about the needs of the sector. The department has developed programs to help meet those needs, and over the upcoming years will assist eligible organizations build capacity and access financing. It's just one more way that WD is helping to strengthen communities and build a stronger West. \*

# ACCESS.

April - June 2005

LBERTA

## Alberta Business Excellence Takes Centre Stage

by Barb Steele

An excited buzz ran through the crowd. Faces of hopeful business leaders from across Alberta watched as the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual **Alberta Business Awards of Distinction** gala ceremony began.

Gathered at Edmonton's Shaw Conference Centre on February 23 were the movers and shakers, the up-and-comers, the business elite — Alberta businesses whose innovative ideas are building a stronger economy. Community, business and government leaders from across the province were on hand to acknowledge the success and contributions of the business community that helps create the Alberta advantage!



The Awards, hosted by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce, recognized business savvy in areas ranging from youth employment to First Nationsowned business, employment of persons with disabilities to learning and diversity in the workplace. Awards were presented in 13 individual categories, as well as the prestigious Premier's Award of Distinction, which is presented annually to a company

chosen from finalists in all award categories to recognize outstanding achievement, leadership and community involvement.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has proudly sponsored the **Export Award of Distinction** for seven years. WD is committed to providing enhanced support for international business development in the West by working with the provinces, International Trade Canada and other federal departments to expand global trade and investment opportunities for Western Canada.

The Export Award is presented to the organization that best demonstrates outstanding achievement in exporting products or services outside of Canada's borders.

And the nominees in 2005 were... AltaSteel Ltd., Blue Fall Manufacturing Ltd. and Upside Software Inc. •

continued on next page

## **Turning Scrap I**

by Matthew Wispinski



Doug Maley, Assistant Deputy Minister, WD Alberta Region (R), presented the Export Award of Distinction to Mr. Peter M. Ouellette, President and CEO of AltaSteel (L), at the awards gala held in Edmonton.

What happens when a business makes a commitment to build lasting and profitable partnerships with other companies, recycles material destined for landfill into a useful and marketable product, and, in the process, increases export sales by nearly 100 per cent over a three-year period? People sit up and take notice, that's what! On February 23, Edmonton-based **AltaSteel Ltd.** was recognized for these impressive accomplishments, walking

away with the prestigious Export Award at the 2005 Alberta Business Awards of Distinction gala.

Western Economic Diversification Canada's **Export Award of Distinction** honours an organization that has demonstrated outstanding achievement in exporting products or services outside of Canada's borders. AltaSteel is setting a high standard on this front, bringing their total expected direct and indirect export sales to \$110 million in 2004, up from \$56.1 million three years ago.

AltaSteel takes scrap metal destined for landfill sites and recycles it into useful, valued-added products that are shipped to more than 150 customers in 17 countries around the world. With products used by the mining, oil and gas, agriculture, machinery, forging, cold fishing and construction industries, the company services a diversified market.

The significant export growth AltaSteel enjoys began in 1990 when the company took a big risk, shifting its focus away from domestic business to export opportunities. It developed a creative and innovative export marketing strategy, and put in place a number of initiatives to help realize the vision: partnering with other Alberta customers to increase their exports, regional clustering of customers to promote Alberta manufacturing, development meetings with target export customers and lowering both the company's and their customer's operating costs.

The company hasn't looked back since, pushing forward to develop more cost-effective freight routing and establish



## **Export Success**

direct marketing through technical sales representatives. This latter measure has allowed AltaSteel to bypass agents in other countries and build lasting one-on-one relationships with customers. The result — a better understanding of the unique needs of its clients abroad and a competitive edge in the development of new products to meet these needs.

Partnerships with other western Canadian businesses and customers are also a vital part of AltaSteel's export success. The company participates indirectly through companies such as Alberta Oil Tool, Standen's Limited and MOLY-COP Canada in the export marketplace. This kind of teamwork increases access to markets for all parties, creates new opportunities for economic growth within a wider business context and builds international awareness of what Alberta and Canada have to offer.

AltaSteel remains steadfast in its efforts to minimize the environmental impact of its work. The company's steel-making process, which includes recycling scrap, reduces air emissions by 86 per cent, water pollution by 76 per cent and mining waste by 97 per cent.

The company has set an ambitious target of \$56.1 million in direct export sales by 2009. With a solid plan for ongoing expansion in place — a plan that includes an ongoing commitment to product innovation, partnerships and expansion into untapped markets — the company is well on its way to reaching this goal.

For more information about AltaSteel, visit www.altasteel.com.

Western Economic Diversification Canada congratulates AltaSteel for its creative and innovative export strategy that has helped put Alberta on the world map as a leader in business excellence in the steel industry.

clients dream has been fulfilled as AltaSteel produces high quality alloy steel from discarded automobiles, food cans, appliances, worn out drilling rigs, old farm machinery and many other cast-offs. That thousands of Albertans are employed recycling steel yet again into finished products by harnessing their natural gas, oil and wood is incredible.

We support the nomination of AltaSteel not only for their direct exports, but more importantly for their part in the competitive supply chain that leads to the two-thirds of our business that is exported around the globe."

> Melvin H. Svendsen President and CEO Standen's Limiten

## **Evoco Inc. – An Intelligent Building Success**

by Barb Steele

Build more simply. This is the philosophy of Evoco Ltd., a Calgary-based software developer specializing in online building management solutions that allow companies to manage more projects, more profitably.

Established in 1999, Evoco recognized the need for architectural, engineering and construction industries to share project information in a secure environment, regardless of the platform or technological capabilities. The company developed an intelligent technology solution that injects speed, accuracy and efficiency into these often traditional industries.

The company's online work centre connects suppliers, trades and contractors to up-to-date plans and critical project information. The ability of team members to make changes and share updates instantly, access CAD drawings without software and print plans are just a few benefits. By streamlining the build process, companies are able to reduce miscommunication and work more efficiently.

Evoco -

Evoco also realized there was a growing trend toward volume homebuilders and there was huge potential for its product in this U.S. market, but didn't have the right resources to make it happen. With the help of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Evoco was able to hire a University of Lethbridge graduate to help conduct market keeping your team research and develop connected. promotional marketing materials for the U.S. market.

"WD's assistance has allowed us to broaden our marketing efforts and better understand the U.S. construction management landscape," said Alice Reimer, Evoco's VP Sales and

Marketing. "Evoco is now a recognized leader in online solution providers for home builders."

Evoco attended the 2005 International Builders' Show in Orlando, Florida in January. The event, billed as the trade event

powerful enough to match the energy and strength of today's home building industry, was a perfect opportunity for the company to showcase its intelligent technology. Attendees were able to book a personalized online demo and see firsthand the benefits of the Evoco solution.

The company has already established an impressive client list of over 10,000 users around the world. With the help of WD, Evoco is now building for success in the U.S. market.

For information about Evoco Inc., call 1-800-274-5250 or visit www.evoco.com.

For more WD prog to assi www.

## **Exploring Marketing Opportunities** for the Forest Industry

by Barb Steele

At a time when the softwood lumber dispute with the U.S. has impacted on the Canadian lumber industry and all associated sectors, one non-profit Alberta organization has been gathering market intelligence and providing export assistance for the Canadian forestry suppliers and value-

added wood product manufacturers indirectly hurt by the U.S. tariffs.

The Forest Industry Supplies and Logging Association (FISLA) is an independent Canadian industry association devoted to the sustainable economic development of all forest industry sectors. Association members consist primarily of companies that provide goods and services

(including logging) to the primary forest producers of lumber, pulp, paper, newsprint veneer, plywood, oriented strandboard, medium density fiberboards (MDF) and agrifiber. FISLA also provides market support to Canadian valued-added and secondary wood manufacturers.

It's our Business to help your Business...and the Forest Industry! is FISLA's motto. With that in mind, Executive Director Ken Glover approached Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) for assistance to hire Blair Addison, a NAIT Business graduate. Addison helped them expand their Market Intelligence and Export Assistance Service into their target regions of the U.S., South America and the Pacific Rim.

The beneficiaries of FISLA's services are predominantly the small and medium-sized enterprises that have limited marketing and business development resources. The market intelligence that Addison pulls together helps generate business and market access for them.

Glover cited an example of a New York school division looking for a source of wooden desks and shelving — a Request for Proposals posted on a N.Y. procurement site. While any company can find opportunities on Web sites like MERX and Virtual Trade, FISLA saves companies time and money by forwarding only relevant business leads to them.

"Western Economic Diversification Canada's assistance has helped our association, our member

Canadian companies and the graduates exposed to quality training," commented Glover. "WD has been instrumental in enhancing our ability to deliver programs and services to Canada's forest industry."

For more information about the services offered by FISLA, call (780) 489-5900 or visit www.fisla.com. •



## WOWtown: A Child's Journey into the World Close By

by Lorne Perry Calgary Science Centre

Enter the doors of *WOWtown* and watch the look of fascination spread across the faces of excited children. High overhead, in the Urban Crawl play structure, children hang right side up, others upside down. Groups of kindergarten kids build an ambitious red brick tower in the Construction Zone. And, at Curiosity Central, laughter fills the air as children view their own hair through a hand-held video microscopy unit.

In total, there are 25 experiential, learner-driven exhibits integrated into the new children's exploration gallery at the **Calgary Science Centre**. A mix of old and new exhibits engages children on many levels. They have been created to ensure that all children can successfully participate.

Opened in November 2003, WOWtown features playful murals, a smiling sun and movable, kid-operated clouds, and so much more!

Photo courtesy of the Calgary Science Centre.

WOWtown's success is attributed to extensive consultation with the community, schools, parents and, of course, the children.

A close-knit team of designers and science communicators ensured that multi-sensory learning concepts and Alberta's school curricula were built directly into the design.

According to Fraser Mustard, founding president of the Canadian Institute of Advanced Research, enriched learning and discovery experiences (like those received in *WOWtown*) at a very early age, profoundly impact young people's ability to confidently embrace science and mathematics throughout their school careers. These young people are much more likely to adopt careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Operating at near capacity during the spring and summer seasons, *WOWtown* has helped to increase the Centre memberships by 45 per cent, and attendance is up 19 per cent since the exhibit opened. Surveys indicate increased visitor satisfaction, and teachers rave about the high levels of engagement and complementary learning. With such a positive response from the community, we can surely expect to see a new generation of young minds engaged in the sciences.

The \$1 million project was funded through the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program, with approximately half the project costs coming from the federal and provincial governments, and additional funding coming from the City of Calgary and the Calgary Science Centre Society. In Alberta, Western Economic Diversification Canada and Alberta Transportation implement the infrastucture program.

## **ASTech Invites Nominations for 2005 S&T Awards**

by Jason Darrah

ASTech Communications Chair

Across Alberta, innovators in science and technology are making discoveries each day that improve the lives of all Canadians and help grow our regional economies. These scientists, researchers and community leaders have often eluded the public spotlight while their work has continued to

lead global advancements in areas ranging from primary resource sectors to cuttingedge technologies in the new knowledge economy.

For 15 years, the Alberta Science and Technology Leadership (ASTech) Foundation has worked to generate recognition for these deserving individuals and organizations.

The annual **ASTech Awards** are unique in Canada for celebrating the outstanding achievements and contributions in science and technology by individuals, businesses and institutions across multiple sectors.

"There are many exciting developments coming out of our province, all of which contribute to the advancement of our social and economic prosperity," says Guy Mallabone, chair of the ASTech Leadership Foundation. "Since 1989, ASTech has taken a lead in honouring Alberta's brightest minds and rising stars. The ASTech Awards allow us to share the impact their work is having on the future of our province and the lives of all Canadians."

The Foundation is now accepting nominations for the ASTech Awards in over 10 categories. The deadline for nominations is June 30, 2005.

The annual ASTech Awards will be held at Calgary's Hyatt

Regency Hotel on October 14. As Alberta's premier award program for science and technology, over 1,000 business, government, research and educational institutions, media and community leaders annually attend the black-tie gala to honour deserving innovators in a range of disciplines. In addition, \$98,000 in financial support was awarded to finalists and recipients in 2004.



ASTech AWARDS

The ASTech Foundation is a private, non-profit society comprised of 20 forward-looking organizations from the private and public sectors. As a patron organization, Western Economic Diversification Canada is

active in identifying and celebrating science and technology excellence. These efforts help attract and retain high-quality researchers, scientists, innovators and commercial ventures in order to maintain Alberta's competitive edge.

Details on the awards categories and information on how to submit a nomination are available on the ASTech Web site at www.astech.ab.ca.

## Marketing Canada — Lac La Biche Region a Tourism Success

by Kal Polturak

General Manager, Lac La Biche Regional Community Development Corporation

Establishing a marketing plan on a small budget is a challenge. But the Lac La Biche Regional Community Development Corporation (RCDC) did just that, producing a Tourism Marketing Plan for the Lac La Biche Region. They like to think that if the tourist is already on the road, what's a few more kilometres to experience something new!

The marketing plan recently won a **2004 Marketing Canada Award** in the Promotional Campaign category for economic development budgets less than \$200,000. The award was presented during the **Economic Developers Association of Canada**'s 36<sup>th</sup> National Conference in October 2004.

The market interest of the courtesy of Lack Block Sandy Beaches Beache

The marketing plan promotes the Lac La Biche Region as a tourism destination. It consists of print literature, including a visitors guide, postcard, regional map and magazine advertising; exhibiting at tourism trade shows; radio, television and billboard advertising; and a Web site — www.laclabicheregion.ab.ca.

To stretch marketing dollars, the RCDC undertook cooperative activities with tourism operators who wanted to advertise in recreation publications, and joined forces with neighbouring municipalities to cross promote the respective communities.

The promotional effort concentrates on the Alberta marketplace, but the whole world has become a market thanks to the Internet.

Web statistics show an increased number of visitors after every advertising campaign, whether it was print, television or radio. People are responding and looking the region up.

While Canadian visitors to the Web site have increased over the years, U.S. visitors have increased by 62 per cent from the 2002/03 to 2003/04 tourism seasons. European visitors increased by 91 per cent over the same time period, and Asian visits more than doubled! Not only do they visit the Web site, they visit the community as well. Tourism operators reported annual increases in tourist traffic and revenues.

The Lac La Biche RCDC Board of Directors believe this initiative assists small and medium-sized enterprises in a very substantive manner and is a worthwhile endeayour.

While the marketing plan was developed by the RCDC, the project was a joint effort with the Town of Lac La Biche, Lakeland County and 40 local businesses and organizations.

For more information about the Lac La Biche RCDC, call 1-877-623-9696 or visit www.rcdc-rerc.com.

## Digital Image Map Saves Time and Money

by the Trans Canada Yellowhead Highway Association

Over the years, the **Trans Canada Yellowhead Highway Association** has successfully attracted visitors to Western Canada through the *Yellowhead IT! Tourism Marketing Partnership*, which promotes western Canadian communities and businesses along the Yellowhead Corridor.

One component of the partnership is the *Yellowhead IT!*Map — a comprehensive representation of Western Canada. The map is in great demand by visitors planning

a trip to Western Canada, as well as those stopping at visitor information centres along the Yellowhead Corridor. Changes to the map, however, were posing problems, and up-to-date information was becoming more and more difficult to incorporate into the photographic image, which dates back to 1969.

"Adjustments to update this photographic image must be detailed and very

comprehensive. This takes excessive staff time to assemble," advised Jeannette Townsend, association president and mayor of Valemount, B.C. Townsend noted that the funding provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) "has now provided the

Association with the ability to develop a digital image for our Yellowhead IT! Map."

Once digitized and produced in its final form, the Yellowhead IT! Map — a partner piece to the Yellowhead IT! Travel Guide — will provide point-of-reference information to complement the travel guide. This information will include Francophone and First Nation heritage attractions, as well as agro-tourism sites. It is expected to play a key role in promoting both domestic and international tourism along the highway corridor.

"Thanks to the WD funding, we now have the means to develop the digital image and design the map. The timing is perfect to ensure that the map will be ready for the launch of the 2005 Yellowhead IT! Tourism Marketing Initiative," noted Irene Davidson-Fisher, chief executive officer of the association.

For more information about the Trans Canada Yellowhead Highway Association, call

(780) 429-0444 or visit www.transcanadayellowhead.com.

Western Economic Diversification Canada supports tourism initiatives as part of its commitment to building sustainable communities.



# From Waste to Renewable Energy...and International Opportunities

by Laurie Jones

On a trip to Sweden in the mid-1990s, Norm Avison was struck by how advanced some parts of Europe were in developing alternative sources of renewable energy. This was driven by concerns over pollution and global warming, rising fuel costs and the dwindling supply of fossil fuels.

Back home in Vanderhoof, B.C., sawmill operators were looking for an environmentally friendly alternative to beehive burners for disposing of sawdust and other wood waste, and the Sai'kuz First Nation was applying for a forest license and looking for a value-added wood processing facility that could handle its surplus wood.

A forestry consultant turned entrepreneur, Avison recognized the tremendous market opportunities and came up with the idea for a pellet plant that would turn wood waste into pellet fuel. Wood pellets are carbon neutral and burn cleanly so that they don't contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Premium Pellet Ltd. makes wood pellets by drying the raw material,

Premium Pellet Ltd. makes wood pellets by drying the raw material, pulverizing it and then compressing it into small pellets that are smooth to the touch.

Photo courtesy of Norm Avison

"Our main markets are the power plants in Sweden and the Netherlands," says Avison. "Their target is to replace 10 to 12 per cent of their fossil fuels with renewable energy over the next few years."

Established in 1998, **Premium Pellet Ltd.** has now reached capacity, running seven days a week, 24 hours a day. "We've sold everything we can produce, and more," says Avison.

A \$2,621,700 repayable contribution from the **Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative** allowed Premium Pellet to expand its plant to meet overseas sales commitments and double production capacity to 200,000 tonnes a year.

The expansion includes new state-of-the-art technology designed specifically by the company allowing it to use bark, both in the production of pellets and as an environmentally friendly source of power to fuel the dryers and heat the plant.

"The contribution from the softwood initiative was extremely critical for us," says Avison. "This brings us one step closer to developing a viable renewable energy sector in Canada, and makes Premium Pellet the largest pellet plant in the world."

The Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative provided funding for projects in forest-dependent communities that create opportunities for economic development, stimulate investment and create jobs. WD delivered the softwood initiative in Western Canada. \*

## Spotlight Manitoba

by Lee Gregg

Manitoba has a history rich in creative talent: Claire Adams, star of the silent screen; Charles Thorson, the creator of Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd and Snow White; and The Guess Who, who not only outsold the Beatles in 1970, but were the first Canadian rock group to have a No. 1 hit on the American music charts.

Keeping the spotlight on Manitoba's thriving music and motion picture industries was made easier with the announcement of a \$2.4 million contribution under the Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) for Phase II of the Manitoba Music & Motion Picture Development Project (M3P).

M3P is a joint initiative by the Manitoba Audio Recording Industry Association (MARIA) and the Manitoba Motion Picture Industry Association (MMPIA) to increase the competitiveness of Manitoba's music and motion picture industries. The two associations have developed cooperative and individual strategies to increase local, national and international market access, and business and professional development.

Phase I of M3P supported 636 musicians and industry professionals and 96 motion picture producers in their international efforts.

Arbor Records/Studio 11, a producer and distributor of Native American music, secured contracts with Berlinbased label United One Records, Arc Music of England and Norway's Etnisk Musikklubb. The Duhks, a traditional folk, bluegrass and Celtic music band, signed with U.S. Sugar Hill Records, one of the most influential folk/roots labels in the world.

In partnership with Power UK Limited, Original Pictures Inc. produced A Bear Called Winnie. Aired on CBC, the movie drew over one million viewers, an exceptionally high rating. Merit Motion Pictures Inc. produced their first German co-production with ZDF and is working with a Los Angeles production company to market their products in the United States. Those involved contribute these successful collaborations to the assistance and support received under M3P.

The Manitoba music and motion picture industries have seen significant and sustained growth over the last three years. With ongoing support through M3P, these impressive results will continue.

For information on MARIA and MMPIA, visit www.manitobamusic.com and www.mmpia.ca.

The Canada-Manitoba EPA is part of a \$200 million federal-provincial investment in the West. \*



Capt. Harry Colebourn (played by Michael Fassbender) and his bear Winnie, named after his hometown of Winnipeg. Colebourn left Winnie at the London Zoo while he fought in Europe during the First World War. The cub inspired the beloved A.A. Milne character Winnie the Pooh.

## Trading With Our Neighbours to the South

by Lisa Lam-Cadieux Export Link, The Business Link Business Service Centre

Although issues with BSE and softwood lumber seem to take the limelight when it comes to the western Canadian export scene, there is enormous potential for other products and services to be sold across the border.

exportlink liaisonexport

It's no secret that doing business in the United States is significantly different than doing business at home. Even temporary business entry into the U.S. can be a challenge for many Canadians who regularly visit the U.S. to perform contracts, service machinery or conduct training.

To successfully enter and maintain a presence in the market, you need to prepare an export strategy, taking into account U.S. import regulations and procedures. Be sure to access valuable services and resources through various organizations and government agencies to help you become export ready.

One such service in Alberta is the *Export Link*, a specialized initiative of **The Business Link Business Service Centre**. Supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Export Link provides free export information services, resources and referrals, as well as training for new and potential exporters. Export Link also serves as the Alberta

service point for Team Canada Inc, a federal export information service available in each province.

Janna Superstein, president of **Superfly International Inc.**, an Edmonton-based

manufacturer of fly fishing products, recently decided to pursue markets outside of Canada and contacted the Export Link for assistance. "The Export Link provided us with market research leads and valuable resources we required to develop our export strategy," commented Superstein. "This information would not have been easily or readily available without their assistance."

Superstein and staff also benefited from attending several of the Export Link's training sessions.

In March, the Export Link offered new sessions on exporting to the U.S., tax issues, and business entry — all delivered by export experts who shared their knowledge and experience.

For export assistance in your province, call the Team Canada Inc export information service at 1-888-811-1119. When calling within Alberta, you'll reach the Export Link. The Export Link's services and a calendar of events are also accessible online at www.exportlink.ca, or by dropping in to The Business Link located at #100, 10237 - 104 Street in Edmonton.

## Bridging a Gap for Saskatchewan Exporters

by Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership

You could almost hear small Saskatchewan exporters breathe a collective sigh of relief when **nextrade finance**, a new division of **Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership** (STEP), was launched in October 2004.

Created using a \$1.725 million contribution from the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA), nextrade finance is a micro-credit fund that allows small exporters to navigate the often stressful time between making an export sale and receiving payment for it.

Though nextrade has only been in operation for a short time, it has received many applications for financing from Saskatchewan exporters.

"We are not surprised by the number of applications that have been received for financing," noted managing director Glen Millard. "Saskatchewan exporters have identified the need for this type of credit facility for their transactions. They were the driving force behind the development of nextrade finance, which is aimed at responding to their needs."

The loan fund provides short-term, microcredit support for both the pre and post-shipment financing required to complete export transactions. Traditionally, exporters

have had difficulty obtaining this type of financing, particularly for small dollar value transactions. The fund's two programs fill the gap in the market and alleviate a constraint to export growth.

The financing helps to support Saskatchewan exporters that have an export transaction valued at less than \$150,000 with credit terms of 90 days or less. Pre-shipment support is limited to a maximum of 60 days.

Exporters benefit from using nextrade finance by turning sales into cash immediately, eliminating the risk of buyer default on payment and reducing currency risk. They can confidently grow their export business without having to drain available working capital.

To meet a company's specific financing needs, nextrade finance will meet one-on-one and develop a customized financing package to address the requirements of each exporter. To arrange for a meeting or for more information, call (306) 787-4136 or visit www.nextrade.ca.

Western Economic Diversification Canada, Saskatchewan Industry and Resources, and Export Development Canada are partners with the Saskatchewan Trade & Export Partnership.



#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

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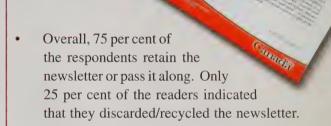
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## The Readers Have Spoken!

by Barb Steele

Thank you to the many readers who completed the readership survey included in our October-December 2004 issue of *Access West*. Like Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) programs and services, the newsletter's readership is diverse. Here are just a few of the highlights from the survey:

- 77 per cent of the respondents represented small businesses.
- Responses indicated that the cross-section of stories is well received, with some obvious categories being of more interest to some respondents than others. For example, small business entrepreneurs preferred stories about WD program information, network information, community economic development and client success stories. Government respondents showed a preference for research studies and information about other government departments. Overall, client success stories were the most popular.
- 67 per cent of respondents read *Access West* cover-to-cover, while 25 per cent read feature articles only.
- Respondents indicated that articles are of the appropriate length, easy to read and informative.



The Changing Climate of Our

Congratulations to these survey respondents who won WD gift packages: B.C. – Vicki Scully (Vancouver) and Richard Hannah (Salt Spring Island); Alberta – Muriel Fankhanel (Alliance) and Dawna Dey Harrish (Sherwood Park); Saskatchewan – Ron Shatkowski (Regina) and Celina Beaton (Assiniboia); Manitoba – Mike Babinsky and H. Peters (Winnipeg); and from outside of Western Canada, Jason LaMontagne.

Your feedback, comments and input are welcome at any time.

Just e-mail the editor a note at access.west@wd.gc.ca.\*



1-888-338-WEST

www.wd.gc.ca



## Ten Years and Still Going Strong

by Barry Lake, Senior Program Advisor, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

For 10 years now, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has supported small businesses through a unique partnership of several integrated organizations that provide entrepreneurs with the products and services they need to establish a business or make it grow. With over 100 points of service across the West, this network of organizations helps make small business ownership a reality for western Canadians.

The foundation of these partnerships was put in place in 1995. That year, WD took over responsibility for the Community Futures Program in the West and its network of 78 (now 90) Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) from Human Resources Development Canada. At the same time, WD established Women's Enterprise Initiative centres (WEIs) and Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) in all four western provinces. In 2001, Francophone Economic

Development Organizations (FEDOs) partnered with WD to create the Western Canada Business Service Network as it exists today.

Over the years, these organizations have helped even the most remote businesses with strategic economic planning, technical and advisory services, loans and selfemployment programs. Ten years, and many success stories and awards later, these partnerships are still going strong.

Small Business Week 2005, October 16-22, is the perfect time to celebrate this important anniversary and acknowledge the hard work of our partners in keeping small business the driving force of the western economy.

This year's theme sums it all up "YOU'RE THE POWER behind the Canadian economy, let's share the energy!"

For more information on our business service partners, visit www.wd.gc.ca or see the contact information on the back cover. For more information on Small Business Week, visit www.bdc.ca.

Since 1995, CFDCs have provided more than 16,750 loans totaling over \$424 million. These leveraged an additional \$589 million.

Since 1999, CBSCs in Western Canada have provided more than 1.25 million in-person services and their user-friendly Web sites attract more than two million visits annually.

Since 1995, WEIs have provided more than 1,100 loans totaling over \$32 million. The report by the Prime Minister's Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs, in October 2003, cited the WEI as an effective model for service delivery to women entrepreneurs.

Since 2001, FEDOs have provided more than 26,000 business services to francophone entrepreneurs. Through their support for pan-west tourism initiatives, the number of francophone tourists visiting Western Canada has grown dramatically.







### **Access West**

#### Fall 2005

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada

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Disponible aussi en francais ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)



#### **MESSAGE FROM**

### The Honourable Stephen Owen

Year after year, small business continues to be the engine of the western economy. In the 2004 CIBC Small Business Outlook Poll, more than 90 per cent of western small business owners were optimistic about their profit outlook and chances for success in the next year. More than 83 per cent of owners said their company was currently profitable. Both these figures outweigh the national average.

As Western Canada establishes itself as Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway, new and exciting opportunities will be available to innovative small businesses in the West. The Government of Canada recognizes the growing economic importance of Asia. Strengthening trade and investment with China and Japan will bring lasting benefits to our region.

Looking ahead to spin-off economic opportunities created by the 2006 World Urban Forum and 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games — both hosted in Vancouver/Whistler — there is much to be optimistic about. This Small Business Week, Western Economic Diversification Canada is proud to partner with the Business Development Bank of Canada and other sponsors to acknowledge the invaluable contribution small business makes to our economy.

By building a stronger West, we are building a stronger Canada.

Honourable Stephen Owen, P.C., Q.C., M.P. Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Sport) By Jitka Licenik, Editor-in-chief

### Welcome to the New Access West!



Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is proud to launch a renewed and revitalized *Access West* magazine that better reflects the priorities of the department and the interests of our key stakeholders.

"Our mandate as a catalyst for economic development and diversification in Western Canada remains the same," said the Honourable Stephen Owen, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Sport), "but our methods have evolved to focus on where we can make the greatest impact."

WD looks for strategic opportunities to collaborate with industry associations, research institutions, universities and other stakeholders. The department enters into partnership agreements that

support its three inter-related priorities: sustainable communities, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Gone are the days when WD provided direct grants or subsidies to businesses. Instead, the department helps innovative small- and medium-sized enterprises flourish in local, national and international markets through a network of dedicated non-profit organizations. The Western Canada Business Service Network partners, which provide business advice, loans or referrals, include the award-winning Canada Business Service Centres, Community Futures Development Corporations, Women's Enterprise Initiative centres and Francophone Economic Development Organizations. You'll find their contact information on the back of every issue of Access West.

As strong supporters of Small Business Week, this year being held October 16-22, the department's focus for this inaugural issue of the new *Access West* is entrepreneurship. In addition to supporting the network partners, WD's other priorities in entrepreneurship include promoting new investment into Western Canada and increasing the presence of western businesses in domestic and global markets to improve the region's international competitiveness.

As part of WD's role as an economic catalyst, the new *Access West* magazine will provide our partners and stakeholders with the latest studies, trends and policy directions in Western Canada. It will provide a glimpse into some of WD's most important programs and initiatives and report on events and milestones that are relevant to the West.

Themes for each issue will continue to be relevant to western interests and diverse in scope. In addition to an annual small business issue, our themes will reflect priority areas for the western economy including environmental technologies, technology commercialization and the social economy.

We hope you enjoy the new Access West. Your feedback, comments and input are welcome at any time. Just email the editor at access.west@wd.gc.ca.

Access West will provide our partners and stakeholders with the latest studies, trends and policy directions in Western Canada.

by Jillian Glover, WD Communications, Vancouver

# Slumped to Pumped: How One Community Futures Office Helped a Region Achieve its Potential

The community was knocking down the door when a Community Futures Development Corporation opened in Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

"Prince Rupert and its neighbouring communities were experiencing a severe economic slump in 1999," said Maynard Angus, general manager for the Community Futures of the Pacific Northwest office. "The region's main industries — fisheries, forestry, and tourism — were all suffering. Our office opened in the midst of all that."

Deemed a saviour by the community, the office became inundated with funding proposals when it opened. Angus had to hit the ground running when he was hired to manage operations.

"When I started, I walked into an empty building with just a desk and telephone," said Angus. In its six years of operation, Community Futures of the Pacific Northwest has grown to a staff of seven and has helped provide \$10.5 million to the region.

"I measure our office's success by the amount of funds that have come through our door for the communities we serve," said Angus.

The economic situation of the Pacific Northwest has changed dramatically since 1999. Now, people are knocking on Angus' door for a different reason: anticipation of huge economic growth from an expanded port and cruise ship terminal in Prince Rupert.

To help make the community a gateway for Asia-Pacific trade and a cruise ship destination, the community will receive \$30 million for port expansion from the federal government through Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

"We will make sure the community benefits from this incredible opportunity," said Angus.

Operating in a service area that is 71 per cent First Nations, the office's partner-ship with this community was recently recognized with the Minister's Award of Excellence and Innovation. The RAIN project (Resources, Access and Information Network) brings computers and Internet access to nine communities, seven of which are mostly First

Nations and face extreme economic challenges. The project is enabling them to develop new skills through on-line learning and connecting to the virtual global community.

"The Community Futures of the Pacific Northwest was critical in getting this project off the ground," said Kim Morrison, director of Finance and Corporate Services for the District of Port Edward.

Community Futures of the Pacific Northwest offers various business services, including loans to small businesses. There are 90 Community Futures offices across Western Canada, all operated in partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada. For more info, visit www.communityfutures.ca.



The community of Prince Rupert now welcomes international visitors to dock at their port thanks to Western Economic Diversification Canada's support toward building their cruise ship terminal.

by Jason Brisbois, Chief Economist, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

## Second Phase of Building the **New West Initiative Promotes Dialogue and Policy Development**



The first step in developing new policies and initiatives for western Canadians is understanding the region's needs, aspirations and opportunities. Each year, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) supports a number of research projects that provide insight into issues of interest to western Canadian citizens and policy makers.

One of the most comprehensive projects was the Canada West Foundation's Building the New West initiative. The first five basic steps the West needs to take to compete in the global economy and maintain a high level of domestic prosperity. These include investing heavily in human capital, increasing the diversity of our products and exports, improving our transportation systems, ensuring our metropolitan centres are world-class economic engines, and improving co-operation among the western provinces.

To encourage dialogue and policy development in the five areas, the Canada West Foundation undertook a second phase of the project. It involved preparing over 30 detailed research reports, as well as holding numerous conferences, meetings, and undertaking extensive communications activities for each one. Advisory committees comprised of leaders from business, government, and academia volunteered their time to guide the work in each area.

A final report on the second phase, Under Construction: Western Canada and the Global Economy, was released in March 2005. The report notes that 44 newspaper articles discussed various findings of the project, over 5,500 copies of project reports were downloaded from the Canada West Foundation's Web site, and more than 3,000 subscribers signed up for the Building the New West newsletter. The project clearly succeeded in getting the word out about western issues and prompting discussion and debate.

The cost of the Building the New West project was \$2,655,000, with 34 per cent coming from the Kahanoff Foundation, 26 per cent coming from WD and the remainder coming from over fifty public and private sector sponsors.

Electronic copies of all project reports are available free of charge on the Canada West Foundation's Web site at www.cwf.ca.

The second phase of the initiative involved preparing over 30 detailed research reports, holding numerous conferences and undertaking extensive communications activities.

by Terry McConnell, Freelance Writer, Edmonton

## Concept to Commercialization a Booming Success

One look out the window from the Edmonton office of Dr. Eric Swanson is testament to the fact a new and diversified economy is taking root in Western Canada — an economy based on cutting-edge technology.

Swanson's office looks out on five massive construction cranes that loom over the campus of the University of Alberta on Edmonton's south side. For Swanson, an industrial technology advisor for the National Research Council Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP), those giant booms serve as a reminder that the West is beginning to realize the economic benefits that come from public investment in companies that transform ideas into success stories.

Many of those success stories took flight at a meeting in Banff in 2001, when the NRC-IRAP and Western Economic Diversification Canada, or WD, joined forces and brought together 50 companies to talk about the future — a future where clusters of like-minded companies could share technology, resources and experiences, and help put Western Canada on the map in a brave new world. The Banff meeting focused the group's thoughts and discussions on how microsystems and nanotechnology can be applied to the life sciences.

Joining forces to mount such an initiative was a natural for both NRC-IRAP and WD, given how the work the NRC is doing through IRAP addresses a key component of WD's mandate — to strengthen Western Canada's economy.

"WD and NRC-IRAP have a long history of working together to accelerate innovation in Western Canada," said Brant Popp, director general of policy for WD.

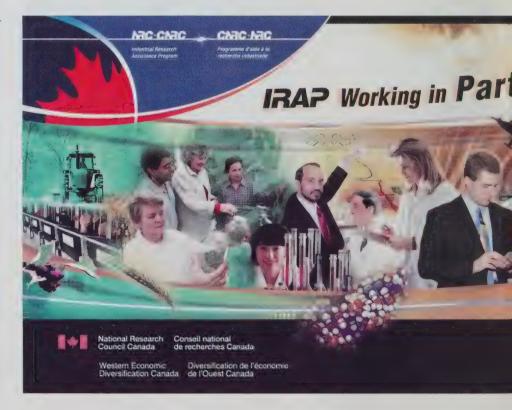
NRC-IRAP's western operation, encompassing not only Alberta but Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories, is appropriately titled IRAP West. Its executive director, Bill Smith, has helped engineer a shift in the program's focus from his Winnipeg office.

Smith says that, first and foremost, NRC-IRAP is in the business of helping small and medium-sized businesses grow, so that they, in turn, can help grow the west-

ern economy. To be sure, that help can come in the form of financial assistance, but that's only one part of the equation, he says.

In short, NRC-IRAP officials often play the role of mentors for their clients. They help find the expertise needed to solve problems, and they provide networking opportunities for people to pick each other's brains.

Joan Barichello, IRAP West's regional director for Alberta and the Northwest Territories, says industrial technology advisors, or ITAs, such as Dr. Swanson and others, are "thrilled" when they can play a role in the growth of a client. "It's





## Rural Albertans to Benefit from Extra Funding

by Jon Close Executive Director, Community Futures Network Society of Alberta

After 20 years of service to rural Albertans, the main purpose of the Community Futures (CF) program remains unchanged: to help people help themselves. What started out as a grassroots community economic development (CED) initiative is still a grassroots community economic development initiative. All that has changed is that more rural Albertans can be helped, in more types of businesses, and with more efficiency and expertise. With \$18.2 million in additional pan-western CF funding announced last summer, and a \$5 million joint federal-provincial rural Alberta CED project announced last spring, many more rural individuals and businesses will benefit.

The Community Futures program is a pan-western federal initiative that, in Alberta, is managed by 27 regional Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) serving more than one million rural Albertans. In 1995, Western Economic Diversification

Canada (WD) became responsible for the ongoing federal partnership with the CFDCs.

With a rich history of successful local leadership, regional CFDC managers and their staff have assisted rural Albertans by providing them with business development loans, technical support, training, business advice, and easy access to experts.

"We seek out every opportunity to exchange ideas between CFDCs and our partners to ensure we can offer rural Albertans the most help possible," said Jon Close, executive director of the provincial network of CFDCs, called the Community Futures Network Society of Alberta (CFNSA).

Speaking at the gala banquet for this year's CFDC conference in Red Deer, Oryssia Lennie, Deputy Minister of WD, expressed WD's pride in the last 10 years of effective partnership with the CFDCs and CFNSA. She said WD was looking forward to the continued success of CF leadership in rural communities for the benefit of all rural Albertans.

For more information on the Community Futures program, regional Community Futures Development Corporations, or the Community Futures Network Society of Alberta, visit www.cfnsa.ca or call (403) 851-9995. ■



At the gala banquet on June 18, 2005, Oryssia Lennie, Deputy Minister, Western Economic Diversification Canada, presents a gift to Glen Freadrich, past chairperson, Community Futures Network Society Association, in recognition of his long service to the community futures program in Alberta.

by Linda Chorney, The Business Link

## Celebrating 10 Years of **Entrepreneurial Spirit**

Albertans truly have entrepreneurial spirit. After 10 years of helping businesses start or expand, requests for services are not slowing down! The Business Link is Alberta's primary Canada Business Service Centre (CBSC). The CBSC is a partner in a business service network managed and partially funded by the federal government through Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

Since The Business Link opened its doors in February 1996, we're proud of the fact that we've helped so many Albertans. With one phone call or one visit, people from across the province can get answers to their many questions. Although the business climate may have changed over the years, today's entrepreneur still faces the same challenges. Where do I start? Where do I find financing? How do I write a business plan? What regulations affect my operations? How do I export outside of Canada? How do I drive traffic to my online store? The Business Link provides timely and upto-date information and contacts to help them on their way.

For those that learn best in a classroom setting, The Business Link offers seminars and workshops for quick-to-learn, quick-to-use business basics. Through the wonders of video conferencing technology and working with the members of the business service network, our reach now extends right across the province.

Although we celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit in Alberta every day, each October we join the nation in celebrat-



General manager Rodger Cole (back row, third from left) and a number of his staff stand in front of the entrance to The Business Link, Alberta's primary Canada Business Service Centre.

ing Small Business Week. The Business Link works with the Alberta Chambers of Commerce and our various network partners to showcase the learning and networking opportunities planned especially for this celebration. From mid-September to the end of October, www.sbwalberta.ca is the central source for Small Business Week in Alberta event information. This year will have particular significance as the province celebrates its 100th birthday.

Over 30,000 clients a year access The Business Link's services by phoning toll-free, walking in to our downtown Edmonton location, or via e-mail. Add over 943,000 web visits last year alone and you have a lot of people accessing business information — not too surprising in entrepreneurial Alberta.

For more information on The Business Link Business Service Centre, call 1 800 272-9675 or visit www.cbsc.org/alberta. by Marie Cusack, WD Communications, Edmonton

## Alberta Women Entrepreneurs: 10 Years of Success and Growing

On November 16, 2005, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) celebrates ten years of partnering with Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), and AWE celebrates ten years of providing Women-To-Women service, or W2W as they like to call it. Over the last decade, this non-profit organization has responded to increasing demand by offering more services, opening new branch locations and relocating to larger offices. What will the next ten years bring? Alison Gray, executive director of AWE says, "We are excited about helping more Alberta women entrepreneurs reach their business goals!"

#### **AWE Financial Programs**

- 1. Fast-Track Micro-Loan Program Quick access to seed capital of up to \$10,000 to kick-start exciting, viable, but not traditionally bankable business ideas.
- 2. Conventional Loan Program Financing up to \$100,000 with an average loan size of \$25,000.
- 3. Loan After-Care Program
  Ongoing business advice and support to help women successfully operate their businesses after the AWE loan.

Demand for business support to women entrepreneurs from the women-oriented business incubator, AWE, is on the rise. According to Gray, "More and more women entrepreneurs are approaching AWE for their financing needs. We have nearly tripled our loan figure from last year's \$522,000 to this year's \$1.5 million. This demonstrates that women entrepreneurs have an increasing impact on Alberta's growing economy and that there is still a need to provide access to capital that is not available through traditional financing."

Gray describes AWE's clients as "having great ideas but they often need help with financial analysis and business planning." An impact study performed in 2001 further revealed that AWE's clients are young, well educated, without direct business experience, and are not afraid to seek out advice and training, especially from other women.

Whether or not they need a loan, women entrepreneurs regularly ask staff at AWE for one-on-one business coaching, or sign up for extra training through regular workshops and circle groups. "The caliber of business owners who come to us are especially drawn towards our circle groups where five or six women join together and engage in action learning," says Gray. "Not only is this a powerful experience, but it is also an incredibly insightful one for participants." Clients also take full advantage of AWE's many networking opportunities, including

### AWE Quick Facts

Funds loaned:

over \$8 million

Loans approved:

345

Information inquiries

avet 108,000

Service requests

uve 25,000

Personal advice appointments:

18,450

Women trained vis workshops:

18,000.

Jobs created via AWE clients:

Sec.

quarterly socials, weekend retreats, showcases, and conferences.

AWE has a staff of nine employees who work out of headquarters in Calgary and branch offices in Edmonton and Lethbridge. AWE is the Alberta delivery agent of the Women's Enterprise Initiative, which is part of a business service network funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For more information on AWE, call toll-free 1 800 713-3558 or visit www.awebusiness.com.

By Frank Saulnier, Chairman and CEO, La Chambre économique de l'Alberta

## La Chambre économique de l'Alberta

La Chambre économique de l'Alberta (CÉA) has been a member of Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) Business Service Network since 1998 and is also a member of the RDÉE Canada network (Réseau national de développement économique francophone).

In Western Canada, the CÉA is a member of the Francophone Economic Development Organizations group. Our mandate is to provide services to francophone small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as to those providing bilingual services in French and English or some other language.

We serve our francophone and bilingual clients through four branches in Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton, St. Paul and Peace River), and help businesses and community groups project themselves more in French so they can benefit from the added value of working in both of the country's official languages.

While the CÉA does not manage its own investment funds, it still plays an economic development role by working with financial institutions that serve the SMEs and the funding agencies. Over the last five years, we have succeeded in generating leverage funding of over \$7 million in terms of money paid directly to businesses or groups but not counting the revenue generated by these leverage funds.

Over the last four years, we have carried out major tourist-industry advertising campaigns in Quebec, France and other

parts of francophone Europe. These campaigns have helped produce a major increase in visitors to Alberta from Ouebec and France.

We have handled over 5,000 inquiries from members of the public and around 20,000 follow-ups. On an annual basis, we work with over 800 existing and new businesses and deliver around 450 training sessions. We make approximately 150 presentations per year to a total audience of 120-150,000 people.

All this work is performed by a team of 10 employees and a few volunteers. We are proud of the fact that we can count on enthusiastic, competent staff.

We are also proud to be a major WD partner and being able to help this department fulfill their official languages mandate, while benefiting from its highly valuable collaboration in fostering the economic development of Alberta's francophone community.



Members of the Chambre économique de l'Alberta gather at the society's annual general meeting on June 17, 2005. From right to left, Randy Boissonnault, elected chairman, Léo Piquette, outgoing chairman and Frank Saulnier, chief executive officer.

tremendously exciting to see the impact of the services that we bring to that table," she said, "the advice, the networks, the connections."

It's an excitement shared by clients who are grateful for the guidance offered by NRC-IRAP's army of experts. "They keep us from going down blind alleys," said Chris Lumb, president of Edmonton's Micralyne Inc., a nanotechnology firm. "What IRAP does for companies like ours, it enables us to reduce our risk in two ways: not just the financial support, but in bringing the right kind of expertise to product development.

For Dr. Yuebin Ning, vice-president

of research for Norcada Inc., another Edmonton nanotechnology firm, it's the networking opportunities NRC-IRAP offers that he finds so valuable.

Moreover, says Jerome Konecsni, vicepresident for corporate development for Bioriginal Food & Science Corp., a biotechnology firm in Saskatoon, it's the background, education and experience of the ITAs themselves that many clients value.

It's more than a complementary relationship, said IRAP West's Barichello, "but a very tangible collaboration." WD is interested in nurturing innovation as part of its mandate, she says, which means

it will work with non-profit organizations and universities to, say, help secure a sophisticated piece of scientific equipment that could help any number of companies. As for NRC-IRAP, "we can help individual companies put that equipment to use," she said.

WD's Popp said the partnership "allows companies to close the gap between the discovery of new ideas and the ability to successfully market new products and services."

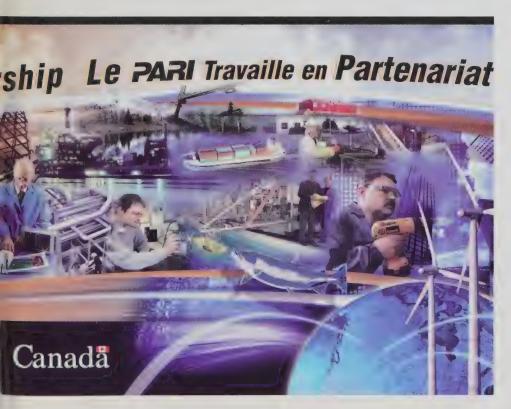
Vivian Sullivan, IRAP West's regional director for Saskatchewan and Manitoba called it "full bang for the public dollar." Whatever it is, it's working.

And, according to Bioriginal's Konecsni, the success that drives NRC-IRAP's and WD's efforts is not rocket science.

Although there will always be the temptation to try and pick winners, "where politicians can cut ribbons," he said, the reality of successful government investment programs is quite different. "Programs work by helping individual companies. At the end of the day, that's where innovation occurs. It's created within a company, with programs designed to work with a company and address its specific needs," he said. "That's what works."

IRAP succeeds, he added, by turning its attention to a company's specific needs, "to bring real products to market that make money. It is a basic, common sense approach to innovation."

And that's good for everyone.



by Tom Wakefield, WD Communications, Vancouver

## High-Tech Company Flourishes in Rural British Columbia

The term "high-tech" isn't often associated with a small community of less than 10,000 people.

Nestled in the Southern Interior of British Columbia, Nelson has traditionally relied on the forestry industry to fuel its economy.

But times change. Communities evolve. And there's an interesting evolution taking place in Nelson.

"There's a fairly large underground technology community here," says Dr. Morgan Dehnel, founder and president of Dehnel Particle Accelerator Components & Engineering Inc, or "D-Pace" for short.

"We're still trying to find out who everyone is. Every time you go into a coffee shop you meet someone new in the technology field."

D-Pace is one of the companies putting Nelson on the high-tech map, and helping the community become a Canadian leader in particle transport systems research.

Starting in the mid-1990s as a consulting firm for the particle accelerator industry, D-Pace switched gears in 2002 to focus on the commercialization and design of particle accelerator components. It licensed eight products from Canada's Tri-University Meson Facility (TRIUMF) located at the University of British Columbia. This world-class subatomic physics research laboratory is home to the world's biggest cyclotron, which is used to accelerate 1000 trillion particles each second.



Morgan Dehnel, founder and president of Dehnel Particle Accelerator Components & Engineering Inc, beside one of the magnets he designed and implemented at TRIUMF.

Today, D-Pace is a world leader in designing industrial charge particle transport systems for ion implantation, radiation processing, and radioisotope production sectors.

Not sure what that means?

"It means that a customer wants a particle beam to get to target," says Dr. Dehnel. "We design how it gets there, right from the beginning to the end."

The technology is used in such areas as nuclear medicine, killing germs (sterilization) and in the production of computer chips.

In May, Dr. Dehnel made a presentation to Nelson City Council. He acknowledged council's support in helping him acquire a \$150,000 repayable grant through Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative.

The funding provided for marketing and business plans, technology transfer, and prototype development that have led to increased sales globally.

"We're swamped," says Dr. Dehnel. The company has six employees and just moved into a new office.

But there was another reason why he decided to address city council.

"The presentation alerted people to what's going on in Nelson. It's not the sort of business that was here in the past," says Dr. Dehnel.

"With all the arts and outdoor activities available, Nelson's a cool place to be. This helps us and other technology-related companies attract people to work here."

For more information on how Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) supports small business, visit www.wd.gc.ca. ■

by Linda Chorney, The Business Link

## An Innovative Way to Educate, Communicate and Participate

Albertans are becoming more and more connected, thanks to the wonders of technology and the Internet. Now, a new video conferencing network is giving Alberta entrepreneurs and small business owners access to business information and interactive training opportunities like never before — without leaving their own communities.

Championed by The Business Link, Alberta's primary Canada Business Service Centre (CBSC), this video conferencing network has 23 business development centres that use IP-based video conferencing equipment to educate and communicate with entrepreneurs across Alberta. Working together under the banner of the Entrepreneurship Learning Centre (ELC), these centres now offer their business clients training and expertise that was previously unavailable within their region.

"No other network like this exists in Canada," said Rodger Cole, general manager of The Business Link. "Not

The Entrepreneurship Learning Centre is a network of 23 business development centres that use IP-based video conferencing equipment to educate and communicate with entrepreneurs across Alberta. only does this connectivity allow our entire network to extend more services to clients throughout Alberta, (but) those clients are saving time and money that would have been spent traveling to seminars and meetings outside their community. It's a win-win situation for everybody."

With the support of Western
Economic Diversification Canada
(WD), the ELC network started
out as a pilot in 2004. It connected The Business Link in
Edmonton, the Alberta Women
Entrepreneurs office in Calgary,
the St. Paul office of La Chambre
économique de l'Alberta, and
Community Futures (CFs) offices in
Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche, Cochrane
and Medicine Hat.

"It soon became evident that there was so much potential and benefit to connecting more of our centres across the province," said Jon Close, executive director of the Community Futures Network Society of Alberta. "The second phase of the initiative saw the network grow to 23 sites, mostly in rural Alberta, including a number of our CFs from as far north as High Level to as far south as Pincher Creek."

In one year, over 4,000 people received training or participated in meetings



by Colleen Gnyp, Freelance Writer, Saskatoon

## Young Entrepreneur Loves Being His Own Boss

Starting a new business is tough work.
Starting a new business as a young adult is even tougher. Help is hard to find.
Investment is hard to get. Mistakes are easy to make.

Fortunately for Matthew Anger, who opened MDG Computers, a computer and electronics retail franchise, in Saskatoon last year, there was someone there to give him a hand.

The Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) is a national charitable organization that helps aspiring entrepreneurs from ages 18 to 34 to start their own businesses.

In 2001, Western Economic
Diversification Canada (WD) contributed
\$900,000 over three years to the CYBF.
The funding included a \$500,000 repayable contribution to establish a loan fund.
The remaining \$400,000 non-repayable contribution established a mentorship program and supported operating, administration and research costs. The WD loan fund contribution was matched by private sector support that CYBF receives nationally from CIBC and Royal Bank, and from corporate contributors in Saskatchewan

The CYBF provides three core services that give young business owners the tools they need for a successful beginning: mentoring, start-up financing, and learning resources in local communities.

"It's tougher to approach traditional lenders (when you're a young entrepreneur)," said Anger. "The program helps to do that." Like most small business owners, Anger started with a thorough knowledge of his field. With a background in engineering, there wasn't much he didn't know about the technical side of his business.

Where he needed help, he said, was in understanding the financing and cash flow needs of a new business. CYBF set him up with a mentor who could guide him through this minefield.

"For me, the mentoring, being set up with a mentor, was the best part," he said. "I have someone to give me extra support."

"You have to remember you don't have a boss any more. You have to be able to talk to somebody. They help you with the things you're not as familiar with." In addition, the CYBF helped the new business acquire capital and financing for inventory, said Anger. "In computers, it's so tough to finance inventory."

"Running a business is awesome," he said. "It's also challenging. There's a big learning (curve)."

"It's nice being my own boss, that's for sure. Ultimately, it's pretty rewarding, not only to support myself, but giving employees a life out of it as well."

To learn more about the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, call Daria Coneghan, regional director, Saskatchewan office at (306) 664-2923, e-mail dconeghan@cybf.ca or visit www.cybf.ca. ■



Matthew Anger stands outside his Saskatoon franchise, MDG Computers, which he opened with the help of the Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

by Lee Gregg, WD Communications, Winnipeg

## Stylistically Innovative

"My husband came home from work one day and announced that he wanted to start a laser business," recalled Alice Taylor. "I thought he was crazy."

Five years later the crazy idea has made Alice and Malcolm Taylor the successful owners of Innovative Laser Works, a company that engraves highly detailed graphic images onto any flat surface, such as granite, acrylic, glass or wood.

"As I worked on the business plan, I was sure the numbers would show it wasn't a viable business," said Alice. "I spoke with the memorial industry who thought it was a great idea. I went to the Women's Enterprise Centre (WEC) who thought it was a great idea and were prepared to provide financial support. I finally went to a bank who not only thought it was a great idea, but were willing to extend a business loan to see it happen."

While working with WEC on her business plan, Alice was encouraged to visit the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC). "The Business Centre was very helpful," noted Alice. "I rented videos that showed me how to work out my profit margins, I researched start-up and marketing information, and I attended the Manitoba Business Start Program business seminar."

Through the C/MBSC, Alice was introduced to the Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN) and was invited to compete in their business plan competition. She surprised herself by winning and used the award money to open up a 2,000 square foot storefront location.

The Taylors were the first entrepreneurs to bring the large format laser to Manitoba and have recently expanded



Clear Night, by artist Sandi Storen, features a mother polar bear and her two cubs trekking across the arctic polar icecap as the cascading colours of the northern lights dance overhead.

PHOTO COURTESY OF INNOVATIVE LASER WORKS PHOTOGRAPHER: LANCE THOMSON, LANCE THOMSON PHOTOGRAPHIC

their services to include edge lighting. These decorative pieces are made out of vector-cut acrylic, then laser engraved and set into a wood base. Light emitting diodes (LED) are placed in the base and illuminate only where the laser engraved. A beautiful example of this technique can be found at the Parklands/Mixed Woods Gallery at The Manitoba Museum.

The company's services include memorial plaques, monuments, donor boards, promotional items, industrial applications, signage, and edge lighting. Clients have used their services to etch photos, images and words on doors, tabletops, fireplaces, plaques, floor inlays and mirrors. In fact, the Taylors are open to any idea their customers bring to them. As Alice likes to point out, their name is "Innovative".

For information on Innovative Laser Works, call (204) 633-0860 or visit www.innovativelaserworks.com.

For information on WEC, C/MBSC and ABSN, visit: www.wd.gc.ca.

"The Business Centre was very helpful. I rented videos that showed me how to work out my profit margins, I researched start-up and marketing information, and I attended the Manitoba **Business Start Program business** seminar."

#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

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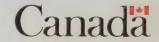
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Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (204) 925-2320 Toll Free: 1-800-990-2332 www.cdem.com







## What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development is the simple idea that we do not inherit our environment from our ancestors; rather, we borrow it from future generations. It is based on the efficient and environmentally responsible use of natural, human and economic resources. This includes sustaining our natural resources, protecting the health of Canadians and ecosystems, and improving our quality of life and well-being.

Corporations and governments across the country are increasingly embracing sustainable development. In 1992, Canada became the first country to sign and ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity, which stemmed from the UN Conference on Environment and Development. Since then, the Government of Canada has continued to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable development, most notably

through sustainable development strategies and the work of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Federal departments and agencies are required to prepare sustainable development strategies and table them in the House of Commons every three years. The Commissioner monitors the extent to which departments have implemented the action plans and met the objectives outlined in their strategies.

From the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) at the University of British Columbia to the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Winnipeg, the West is emerging as a leader in sustainable development and green technologies.

Past achievements such as the 2003 Western Canadian Environmental Technology Forum held in Vancouver are driving Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) to seize future opportunities to show leadership in sustainable

development. One such opportunity will be the World Urban Forum (WUF3), a UN-Habitat conference being hosted by the Government of Canada in Vancouver, June 19-23, 2006.

This biennial gathering brings together a wide range of partners, including nongovernmental organisations, the private sector, community representatives, urban professionals, academics and governments from around the world.

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## **Access West**

## Winter 2006

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada

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#### Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)

## Sustainable development

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It provides a common platform to discuss urban issues in formal and informal ways, and identifies and shares action-oriented ways to achieve sustainable cities.

In preparation for WUF3, the Government of Canada, in co-operation with UN-HABITAT and IBM, hosted the Habitat JAM, a global 72-hour Internet discussion. During the JAM, tens of thousands of people went online to discuss issues of urban sustainability. People from 191 countries registered for the JAM and shared their ideas for action to improve the lives of people living in slums, to improve the environment in cities, and to address issues of finance and security, governance and the future of our cities. The results of the discussion from the JAM will be part of a last-

ing legacy as the content is analyzed and included in the World Urban Forum agenda.

Western Economic Diversification Canada is working with WUF3 Canada to ensure the World Urban Forum is a dynamic and productive dialogue, and that Canada's ideas and achievements in sustainable development leave a lasting legacy.

This issue of Access West celebrates sustainable development and highlights WD projects that make the West a healthier place for us all.

For more information on WD's sustainability initiatives, visit www.wd.gc.ca. For more information on WUF, visit www.wuf3-fum3.ca.



by Lee Gregg, WD Communications, Winnipeg

## The winds of change

Seven years after the Economic
Development Council for Manitoba
Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM)
helped St. Léon establish a Community
Development Corporation (CDC), the
town finds itself at the centre of one of
the most important wind energy parks
in Canada.

Located 150 kilometers southwest of the City of Winnipeg, St. Léon was chosen for this \$90 million project over several other locations. Paul Grenier, President

of the St. Léon CDC, credits CDEM for the success of this project.

"St. Léon approached CDEM for assistance with economic development," said Grenier. "They helped us to set up a round table, similar to a Chamber of Commerce, that became known as the Community Development Corporation. CDEM also helped the CDC negotiating committee by bringing in experts to develop a proposal for the farmers on whose lands the windmills are located. If

it had not been for CDEM, this project would probably never have happened."

Construction of the St. Léon wind farm created a significant economic impact in the region. Three hundred jobs were created during the construction phase, with ten permanent positions created to run the wind farm. Local companies

The St. Léon turbines stand 80 metres tall and weigh approximately 220 tonnes.

Manufactured by Vestas-Canadian Wind Technology Inc., the arctic model was chosen to accommodate Manitoba's winter climate.

Photo Courtesy

HUBERT PANTEL

saw an increase in sales for construction materials and accommodations. Meal service increased five-fold, which led to the hiring of additional employees.

All of the power generated is sold to Manitoba Hydro under a 25-year power purchase agreement. St. Léon farmers will earn about \$275,000 a year from the 63 wind turbines scattered over their 51 farms. The municipality and school division will also earn approximately \$750,000.

The concept for a wind farm came from Sequoia Energy Inc., a project development company from British Columbia. Partnering with Global Renewable Energy Partners Canada, the two formed Bison Winds to develop the project. Air Source Power Fund (AirSource), a finance company established to invest in wind energy, was brought in to help with financing. AirSource established St. Léon Wind Energy to finance and run the wind farm.

Bison Winds—impressed with the outstanding support from the town of St. Léon, the CDC and CDEM—is now looking at establishing a wind farm in Pembina Hills, south of St. Léon. This is welcome news for southern Manitoba's rural communities, which are still suffering from the most widespread summer flooding in the province's history and the resulting economic fall-out.

CDEM, a member of Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) Business Service Network, has been the driving force behind economic development in Manitoba's bilingual communities since 1996. For more information, please visit www.cdem.com/english/ or www.wd.gc.ca.



by Jason Brisbois, Chief Economist, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

# OECD Regions at a Glance: a publication of regional economic indicators

In Canada, regional development agencies, such as Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) in the West, are responsible for federal regional economic development policies and programs. This approach allows regional agencies to implement policies and programs tailored to the economic challenges and opportunities present in each region. Regional economic development also makes an important contribution to economic growth and prosperity at the national level. In other words, stronger regions lead to a stronger country.

In recent years, the relationship between regional economic growth and national economic prosperity has become the focus of intensive study in many of the 30 member countries of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Now, the relationship between regions and international economic competition is gaining in importance. Activities of international bodies such as the European Union, the World Trade Organization and the North American Free Trade Agreement are following globalization trends and increasing the amount of cross-border, international economic competition taking place at the regional level as opposed to the national level.

For example, much of the trade activity and economic competition in Western Canada takes place on a north-south axis with the United States along specific trade corridors such as the Pacific Northwest Corridor, the Alberta-Montana corridor, and the Great Plains corridor that exist between Saskatchewan, Manitoba and their bordering US states.

The increased focus on regional economic trends has generated new demand for statistical indicators at the regional level. Policy makers need sound statistical information about sources of regional competitiveness, but data at the regional level are limited and regional indicators are difficult to compare because OECD countries define regions in different ways. The OECD Regions at a Glance publication fills this gap by presenting and comparing regional trends across OECD countries.

The publication presents and analyses a variety of indicators including population, gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment, labour force composition, labour productivity, home ownership, and educational levels among others. Using color-coded maps, charts, and graphs, each regional indicator is compared across OECD countries with written commentary on the findings.

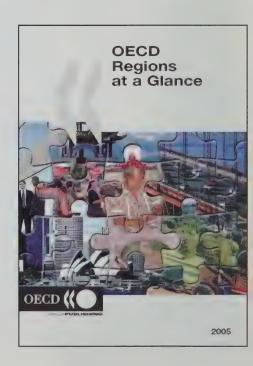
One indicator explored in the publication is the growth in employment. The publication shows that in most OECD countries, national growth is strongly concentrated in only a few regions. In the average OECD nation between 1996 and 2001, only *half* of the job growth was concentrated in 10 per cent of the regions. However, in Canada,

three-quarters of the job growth was concentrated in 10 per cent of the country's 288 census divisions.

Regional development policy makers can use such observations to identify regions with slower job growth and develop policies to improve performance by comparing differing trends and practices across OECD countries.

Copies of OECD Regions at a Glance can be ordered online through the OECD bookstore at http://new.sourceoecd.org.

For more information, contact Ray Bollman, research economist at Statistics Canada, at (613) 951-3747 or Ray.Bollman@statcan.ca.



by Michelle Yao, WD Communications, Ottawa

# Strengthening fuel cell research in Canada

Over the past four years, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has played a key role in establishing a western Canadian fuel cell "cluster,"—a group of organizations that focuses on fuel cell and hydrogen research. This cluster is putting Western Canada in a unique position in the emerging hydrogen and fuel cell sector.

A fuel cell combines hydrogen and oxygen to produce reusable energy. The energy can be used in almost all applications that require electrical power such as cell phones, laptops, watches and automobiles.

WD's investment in fuel cells supports the department's commitment to building sustainable communities and stimulating innovation. In February 2005, Ference Weicker & Company Ltd. prepared the Assessment of WD Support to the Western Canadian Fuel Cell Cluster 2001-2004 to evaluate WD's impact on the industry. WD invested approximately \$12.1 million into 22 fuel cell cluster projects to promote the industry to various levels of government and to develop programs and initiatives to increase awareness of the sector.

The review found that WD support strengthened research capabilities, developed new technology, increased linkages and job opportunities, and encouraged regulations and standards development. It also concluded that stakeholders see WD as an effective facilitator that makes strategic investments in research and development and leverages funds from other sources.

Chris Curtis, Vice President of Fuel Cells Canada, agrees, "WD has had a very positive influence on the development of the Canadian fuel cell industry by providing support for broad-based networking and cluster building activities, funding for core infrastructure and encouraging knowledge-based research." Fuel Cells Canada is a non-profit industry association that promotes, supports and represents fuel cell makers.

Working in partnerships, WD has formed links with industry, other governments, and research institutions to strengthen infrastructure and support the innovation needs of Canadian fuel cell companies. Two funding projects include the April 2004 Citaro hydrogen fuel cell bus, which was featured at HYFORUM, an international hydrogen forum in Bejing, China, and the November 2004 Hydrogen Technology Environmental Chamber at Canada's National Research Council Institute for Fuel Cell Innovation.

Despite considerable government support and private sector investment, there are still challenges that the fuel cell industry must overcome. Although fuel cells demonstrate incredible promise, they continue to be seen as an alternative energy source for tomorrow. WD will continue to work with the industry to help the fuel cell cluster progress, meet new challenges and realize its potential.



Ballard's Mark 902 fuel cell power module currently powers light and heavy-duty fuel cell vehicles on roads worldwide.

by Terry McConnell, Freelance Writer, Edmonton

## Health and wellness in the West

The pioneer spirit that spurred European settlement in Western Canada over 100 years ago remains alive and well—"well" being the key word—in pioneering efforts of a different kind.

Today, the West is blazing trails in the field of wellness and good health. Nowhere is that more evident than with Wellness West, in which the federal government, the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, as well as a host of private companies collaborate to promote the functional food and nutraceutical industry.

Simply put, the purpose of Wellness West is "to promote wellness," says Vivian Sullivan, regional director for the National Research Council Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC- IRAP) in Manitoba. She is also the point person for the Wellness West initiative. "People are increasingly interested in looking at a natural approach to maintaining good health. Wellness West is at the heart of it."

At the heart of Wellness West is the explosive growth of the functional food and nutraceutical industry in Western Canada.

What are functional foods? "They have properties and advantages for health that go beyond their nutrient content," says Sullivan. "For example, flax contains certain fatty acids that are deemed to help cardiovascular health."

She cites Omega-3 eggs as a functional food that shoppers see in supermarkets.

"They are eggs where the poultry has been fed feed that contains ingredients rich in fatty acids such as flax meal." The eggs contain fat and protein, as well as specific compounds that can help maintain health. And it's all natural.

Similar to functional foods, nutraceuticals occur naturally in foods and have medicinal properties. However, they are isolated from foods and sold in dosage form. An Edmonton company, CV Technologies, has found commercial success with Cold FX, a product that's been proven through clinical trials to prevent and lessen the severity of cold symptoms. Sullivan says one of the key ingredients in Cold FX is an extract of ginseng, a natural herbal remedy.

To grow the functional food and nutraceutical industry in Western Canada makes sense, says Sullivan, because it plays to the natural strengths of the region: initiative, co-operation and, of course, a sophisticated food production system.

"This is a strong opportunity in Western Canada because we grow a lot of crops that have much higher value because of these properties," says Sullivan.

Moreover, she considers Wellness West "a wonderful story," one that involves federal and provincial governments doing their part to grow the functional food and nutraceutical industry by "working together to leverage each other's resources and capabilities."

NRC-IRAP supports innovative research, development and commercialization of new products and services. Its role with Wellness West is to help form and





# Manitoba

# Manitoba's Libyan Tiger

by Lee Gregg, WD Communications, Winnipeg

"Red River is like a Libyan tiger," wrote Hudson Bay Company governor Sir George Simpson in the 1830s. "The more I try to tame it, the more savage it becomes; so it is with Red River, for every step I try to bring it forward, disappointments drives it back two."

The 1800s were a difficult time for the Red River settlers as they struggled with severe winters, locusts and floods that would wipe out crops and destroy entire colonies. Two hundred years later we still battle the Red River, but we are also restoring its waterways and celebrating the pivotal role it played in the history, culture and development of Canada's postage stamp province.

Rivers West, known officially as Red River Corridor Inc./L'Association du Corridor Rivière Rouge, was established in June 1999 to develop a long-term tourism and economic development strategy and to promote conservation and sustainable development principles along the Red River corridor from Emerson to Lake Winnipeg. To date, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has invested \$389,750 in Rivers West for marketing and greening initiatives through the

Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement.

The projects that Rivers West have supported are numerous and varied. Together with the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation and Nature Conservancy of Canada, Rivers West is protecting parcels of land, such as the Shay Property near St. Adolphe. This

ecological reserve, approximately seven hectares in all, is situated along the eastern bank of the Red River and supports the river-bottom forest (a forest that grows along the edges of rivers and streams and stabilizes banks to reduce erosion). With support from Rivers West, the Province of Manitoba has included this property in the Manitoba Network of Protected Areas.



Senkiw bridge was constructed in the 1930s by area residents for children to cross the Roseau River to get to school. The Crow Wing Trail Association in Franklin reconstructed this bridge and, with support from Rivers West, will install an interpretive sign to explain its history. PHOTO COURTESY OF EILEEN GUNN

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Rivers West has also launched its Routes on the Red website, www.routesonthered.ca, to promote existing tourism opportunities through self-directed tours and travel packages. Twenty self-directed tour brochures are currently available and more are planned.

In the summer of 2005, Rivers West nominated the Red River as a Canadian Heritage River. Lorna Hendrickson, executive director of Rivers West, hopes that the designation will come through in time for the Canadian River Heritage Conference that Rivers West will host in 2007.

"The money Rivers West received from WD made it possible to leverage additional dollars from other sources," said Hendrickson. "When communities see that money has been committed to projects, it's much easier for them to move forward and secure funding from other sources."

Linda Morin, municipal counselor for the RM of Ritchot, worked on the Rivers Access Study with Rivers West. The study looked at the feasibility of putting docks and wharfs on the Red River south of Winnipeg to Emerson. Steamships once routinely plied their trade between Winnipeg and St. Paul, Minnesota, but today the river is virtually unused and remains one of the few uncharted navigable waterways in North America.

Morin is also working on the Crow Wing Trail, a historic trade route that was eliminated after the introduction of the CP Rail line to Manitoba in the 1870s. Opened in 1844, this 153-kilometre trail was used by fur traders to move goods between St. Paul and Upper Fort Garry. The Crow Wing Trail Association, made up of representatives from Ritchot, De Salaberry, Franklin, Niverville, St. Pierre, Emerson and Roseau Rapids First Nations, is working to revitalize this historic ox cart trail, part of the Trans Canada Trail that links Winnipeg and

Emerson. The association received funding from Rivers West to develop unique interpretive signage that incorporates an ox cart into its design.

"Without Rivers West, I would not be able to make any progress at all," noted Morin. "Rural municipalities lack the funds to develop the proposals you need to secure financial support for product development. With this study, our communities can now go forward and seek funding."

Working with Rivers West, the Town of Emerson developed the Forgotten Forest Trail. Originating at Fort Dufferin, the two-kilometre trail interprets the river bottom forest as it winds its way along the riverbank and joins the Crow Wing Trail.

Wayne Arseny, president of Historic Emerson Inc., is pleased with the sup-



In a CTV special about the Town of Emerson, Wayne Arsney, playing the part of Fort Dufferin's first commissioner, Sir George French, appears in the original North West Mounted Police red serge. In the background is the fort's original barn. PHOTO COURTESY OF WAYNE ARSNEY

port that Rivers West has provided and has high praise for Hendrickson. "Lorna is the person who steers and anchors us. She's the go-between with other agencies, knowing who to call and setting us in the right direction."

Rivers West also gave financial support for a study to look into the feasibility of building a nature/equestrian campground using the Mounties' red serge as a colour scheme. The Town of Emerson was built up around Fort Dufferin, which was literally thrown together in 1872 to serve as a base and main supply depot for the Boundary Commission and the newly formed North West Mounted Police (better known today as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police). The fort was the first official headquarters for the law enforcement body before it set out on its March West to establish Fort MacLeod in Alberta and solidify Canada's claim on the West.

"This can be Manitoba's symbol," declared Arseny. "Emerson is the birth-place of the RCMP. The federal and provincial governments recognize that the fort is one of the most significant historical sites in the province. Four original wooden buildings still stand, but they are falling apart and need to be restored. We have the study but now need capital to make it happen."

Rivers West is also working with the St. Norbert Heritage Trail Association to develop the Sentier Cloutier Trail in southern Winnipeg. The St. Norbert Heritage Trail system is part of the Trans Canada Trail, which links into the Crow Wing Trail at the Red River Floodway.

Janice Lukes, community liaison for St. Norbert Heritage Trails, has nothing but praise for the work Hendrickson and Rivers West have done to support the Red River development. "We received \$25,000 from Rivers West, which allowed



Visitors enjoy a stroll along the Sentier Cloutier Drive Trail in St. Norbert. Photo courtesy of Janice Lukes

us to leverage an additional \$157,000. Rivers West was one of the first organisations to recognize the significance of this project and its substantial contribution has served as a catalyst for securing local support and funds. We continue to be grateful for the enthusiastic support Sentier Cloutier Trail receives from the public and the growing number of private resources now participating in the project's development."

Lukes is very excited about the projects St. Norbert Heritage Trails is working on. There is a series of walking, biking, cycling, horse and water trails that take visitors through a history that includes the starting point for the annual buffalo hunt and the home of the Red River Floodway gates.

"St. Norbert is the birthplace of Manitoba and is home to many national

and provincial historic sites," said Lukes. "With assistance from Rivers West, we encouraged the Trans Canada Trail Committee to re-route the national trail through St. Norbert, enabling all users to explore the rich history and culture of this area. It's been fantastic for our tourism component."

Kurtiss Krasnesky, president of the Red River North Trail Association, has been working with Rivers West since 2004. "It's been a wonderful partnership," said Krasnesky. "To get this level of cooperation and to see the government recognizing this as a priority and backing Rivers West, I'm really proud of this. Hats off to the government for stepping up to the plate."



The Red River North Trail winds its way north of Winnipeg and through the community of Birds Hill, which has transformed this abandoned gravel pit into a park to enhance the Trans Canada Trail. PHOTO COURTESY OF KURTISS KRASNESKY

The Red River North Trail makes up part of the Trans Canada Trail that runs from Lockport to Lower Fort Garry. The association has had some difficulty completing four kilometres of the trail due to a lack of physical space. There is not enough right-of-way in the ditch that runs between the highway and the owners of private property. Rivers West provided funding to develop this section of the trail, and Hendrickson connected the association to an architect. Working closely with an engineering firm and Manitoba Highways, the technical and architectural work is completed and Krasnesky is confident that the trail will be finished by summer 2006.

From Emerson to Lake Winnipeg, the city of Winnipeg and the towns and villages

along the Red River will benefit from this coordinated marketing approach. Initiatives will not only promote communities, but will also support sustainable development along this historical waterway through a new greening program.

The Red River offers natural space, historic sites and recreational activities for Manitobans and visitors. Lower Fort Garry, Twin Oaks, Kennedy House and St. Andrews Church are well known favourites. But the Red River corridor has many other hidden treasures waiting to be discovered: the first log-constructed Customs house in Western Canada, the largest remaining tracts of tall-grass prairie, and many historic museums and buildings that re-create the pioneer past.

Like Governor Simpson, Rivers West is also experiencing difficulties with

Manitoba's Lybian tiger. Flooding and heavy rains during the spring and summer of 2005 put 99 per cent of Emerson's Forgotten Forest Trail under water. The highest summer flood on record delayed construction of the Sentier Cloutier portion of the St. Norbert Heritage Trail, and portions of the Red River North Trail were submerged as well.

But Manitoba's relationship with the Red River has compelled residents to be inventive and resourceful—a legacy of optimism and fortitude handed down by the Red River settlers. Manitoba's landscape may have changed, but not its pioneer spirit.

For information about Rivers West, visit www.riverswest.ca. For information about the Red River corridor trails, visit www.mrta.mb.ca/transcnd.html.

develop a western partnership on functional food and nutraceuticals. At the federal level, that includes Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

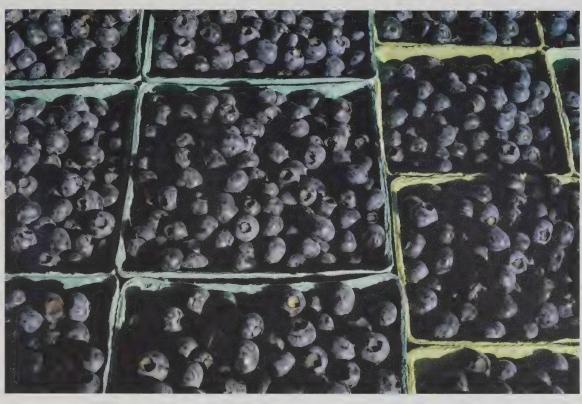
"NRC-IRAP is always very keen to have the right expertise in the right place, at the right time," says Sullivan of the involvement of WD and others.

Brant Popp, director general of corporate policy for WD, agrees this type of partnershipbuilding enhances the Wellness West initiative. "WD and NRC-IRAP

act as investors and catalysts promoting individuals, firms and communities to be more innovative and entrepreneurial," he says.

These efforts appear to be paying dividends. Dr. Jerzy Zawistowski, vice-president for functional foods and nutraceuticals at Vancouver-based Forbes Medi-Tech Inc., says Wellness West is a great way for private industry to learn the ropes in a field of commerce still very much in its infancy.

"Canadian developers try to position themselves to keep up with worldwide trends [in the functional food industry]," savs Zawistowski. Wellness West is an important tool "to promote functional foods and nutraceuticals, to help private



Blueberries are rich in antioxidants, which protect against cell damage.

industry, and to teach them how to communicate with Health Canada about the regulatory process."

NRC-IRAP's industrial technology advisors (ITAs) work through mechanisms such as Wellness West to help their clients.

"We could have sent the ITAs travelling around the province, but that would be a waste of time," says Bill Smith, executive director for NRC-IRAP in Western Canada. "That's why we invest in things like Wellness West; we reach more people." These people, in turn, learn what it takes to be competitive and to overcome challenges to be successful.

ITAs have helped their clients become involved in other organizations as

well. Zawistowski cites as an example the British Columbia Functional Foods Network, a non-profit organization that was brought to his attention by Maureen Hatanaka, his company's ITA. "She started my involvement in functional foods outside my company," he says, calling the experience invaluable.

Jerome Konecsni, vice-president of corporate development for Bioriginal Food & Science Corp. in Saskatoon has also found his involvement with Wellness West to be a rewarding experience. "The meetings I've been at have been very worthwhile," he says. "It's a mechanism for government programs and funding to maintain their relevance to companies and the markets they serve."

Dy Jillian Glover, WD Communications, Vancouver

# Hybrid electric cars driving opportunities in B.C.

Feeling the pinch at the gasoline pump? The rising cost of fuel has more people considering alternative energy vehicles. However, experts estimate that it may be anywhere from 10 to 30 years before hydrogen fuel cell-powered vehicles are commonplace. In the meantime, the popularity of electric and hybrid electric vehicles is rising as fast as gasoline prices.

The interest is evident in auto dealers' showrooms as Toyota's Prius and Honda's Civic Hybrid attract customers. Toyota cannot keep up with the demand for its new Prius, and Ford has made its move by releasing its SUV hybrid (Ford Escape Hybrid).

To address the hybrid electric car boom, the University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV) in Abbotsford, B.C., conducted a study to assess the hybrid sector in B.C. and determine the feasibility of establishing an Alternative Vehicle Centre. The study was supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

By investing in environmental technologies, Canadians are protecting their natural environment, saving energy costs, and developing high technology business opportunities. Many of the latest developments in the alternative energy sector have been supported through WD investments.

Companies from B.C.—particularly Greater Vancouver—are among the global leaders in fuel-cell technology innovation. The UCFV study found that the high number of alternative vehicle research



UCFV, the
University of
Colorado at Denver
and ECO Fuel
Systems of Langley
are testing the use
of natural gas in
hybrid vehicles.

facilities in British Columbia indicates that the province has excellent automotive engine and fuel cell laboratories and institutions. However, electric and hybrid electric vehicle facilities are not as prevalent. According to UCFV, British Columbia can fill this gap by establishing an Alternative Vehicle Centre.

"Electric and hybrid electric vehicles hold exceptional promise with respect to improving fuel efficiency and air quality in the Fraser Valley," said Harvey McCullough, Dean of Trades & Technology at the University College of the Fraser Valley. "With an Alternative Vehicle Centre, B.C. has an opportunity to showcase its advances in hybrid electric technology."

The study also found that an Alternative Vehicle Centre in B.C. would increase applied research and technology transfer

capabilities, and help the province meet its responsibility to promote sustainable development and environmental protection.

The centre would foster a wide range of projects. Currently, UCFV, in partnership with the University of Colorado at Denver, and ECO Fuel Systems of Langley, is testing and researching the functionality of natural gas in a hybrid vehicle. Most hybrid electric vehicles use fossil fuels, which negatively impact air quality. The partners have successfully converted a gasoline-powered 2005 Ford Escape hybrid electric vehicle to a natural gas/gasoline dual-fuel system. This modified natural gas hybrid is the first passenger vehicle prototype of its kind.

"With this new discovery, and the potential of establishing an Alternative Vehicle Centre, B.C. can lead the way in sustainable development," said McCullough.

by Marie Cusack, WD Communications, Edmonton

## Cardel Place awarded Alberta's first LEED Gold

In June 2004, the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) awarded Calgary's Cardel Place with Alberta's first LEED Gold certification.

Cardel Place, located in north-central Calgary, features a fitness centre, a multicomponent aquatic facility, three gymnasiums, two NHL-size arenas, a branch of the Calgary Public Library, a pro shop, a sports medicine clinic, child minding services, food service facilities, community meeting rooms, and offices. Operated by the Nose Creek Sports and Recreation Association, this community-oriented recreation complex has become a daily destination point for more than 80,000 community residents in an area that formerly had no public recreation facility.

USGBC is the foremost organization of builders promoting environmental stewardship across the world. Certification by USGBC means that a project has gone far beyond basic energy conservation. According to the council, the LEED Gold rating recognizes Cardel Place as "a pioneering example of sustainable design." Some of the innovative environmental features that garnered international acclaim include the following:

- · an on-site storm water retention pond
- · an abundance of windows, natural light, and sunshine
- · water reduction by one million litres per year through waterless urinals, low flush toilets, and electronic faucets
- energy reduction of 30 per cent through high efficiency boilers, pumps, lighting, and occupancy detectors
- a smoke-free environment

- a heat recovery system
- · 'free cooling' from the outside air, rink refrigeration, and snow melt

Cardel Place was financed through a partnership involving all three levels of government, the community, and private sector organizations. Government funds were contributed through the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program, which works to enhance municipal infrastructure across Alberta and to improve Albertans' quality of life through investments that protect the environment and support long-term economic growth. In total, the Government of Canada, through the department of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), contributed \$522,500 towards this project.

By providing diverse sport and recreation programs to adults and children of all ages, Cardel Place makes it easier for Calgarians to live healthy lifestyles and improve their quality of life. Winning a LEED gold certification confirms that Cardel Place is true to its vision "to be an inspiring destination enriching individual, family and community lifestyles."

## WHAT IS LEED™?

Leadership in Energy and **Environmental Design (LEED)** certification is an international measurement tool used to gauge the environmental performance of buildings. The tool uses a total of 69 criteria to establish whether a building meets the rigorous environmental standards established by the United States and **Canada Green Building Councils** in five major categories:

- Sustainable Sites
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and Atmosphere
- Materials and Resources
- Indoor Environmental Quality

An additional category, Innovation & Design Process, addresses sustainable building expertise as well as design measures not covered under these five environmental categories.



by Cameron Zimmer, WD Communications, Saskatoon

## Touring Saskatchewan's wild frontier

When over 100 tourism journalists from around the world convened in Saskatoon last spring for the Rendezvous travel conference, the biggest draw wasn't a destination resort or championship golf course, but Saskatchewan's uncluttered horizon.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is using this prairie appeal and \$199,000 provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) to establish a visitor centre that will bring tourists to the grasslands of Old Man on His Back Conservation Area in Southwest Saskatchewan

The conservation area was established when Peter Butala and his wife, Order of Canada author Sharon Butala, provided NCC with 13,000 acres of their ranchland in 2001.

"Saskatchewan's always thought of as flat fields, but it's good to show people different areas," says Peter Butala. "It's not striking like the Rockies or the Great Lakes, but it has its own beauty. It catches you."

Doubling as a tourist site is nothing new for the Butala homestead. Over the last century it has welcomed former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, Pulitzer Prize winner Wallace Stegner and the North West Mounted Police, who used it as a hitching post.

Nearly 200 visitors traveled to Old Man this year, but NCC expects 500 to 1,000 tourists when the new visitor centre, ranch, the T.rex Discovery Centre and promotional displays at nearby Cypress Hills and are in place.

"We want to offer people a place where they can go and experience tranquility," says Bob Santo from NCC.

More than tourism potential, it's this search for solitude that motivated the Butalas to establish this haven and see the grassland flourish without impediment.

"When you look out on the horizon and don't see any development or building, you get a feeling of openness—the vastness of it," says Butala. "You can look around the prairie and let your imagination run a little wild."

Part of this vision was realized when 50 wild bison were transported from Elk Island National Park in Alberta and released to roam on the Old Man prairie. Researchers are also studying the more than 150 varieties of wild grass that grow there, many of which are endangered by expanding farmland.

"We've never given this land a chance to see what it has and we don't know the answers to some good questions about the sustainability of local natural systems," says Butala.

Now, he says, is the perfect time to explore these answers.

For more information about the Old Man on His Back Conservation Area, call the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Saskatchewan office at 1 866 622-7275 or visit www.natureconservancy.ca.



by Lee Gregg, WD Communications, Winnipeg

## 2,653,700 and one tire revolutions or bust

Two thousand five hundred miles and four awards later, the Red River College's Red River Raycer made its mark at the 2005 North American Solar Challenge, a competition to design, build and race solar-powered cars.

Run every two years, the 2005 event drew 27 teams from across North America in what was the first international and world's longest solar car race—2500 miles from Austin, Texas to Calgary, Alberta.

With financial assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), the members of the Red River Raycer (r3) Solar Car Team were given a hands-on opportunity to stretch their technical and creative abilities, participate in an international event, and promote the capabilities of solar-powered vehicles.

Fifty-six universities signed up for the 2005 competition. Twenty-seven showed up for the scrutineering and qualifying rounds and 20 made it to the gate. "The competition is designing and building a car that can get to the starting line," said Leon Fainstein, mechanical engineering technology instructor at Red River College. "It's amazingly tough and stressful, but the learning experience for students is unparallel."

In 2003, the average cost to build a solar car was \$300,000. McGill University spent \$600,000 and the University of Waterloo, \$800,000. With only an \$80,000 budget in 2005, the r3 team used innovation and perseverance to build a car that was one of only 20 to cross the finish line.



The Red River Raycer Solar Car Team worked out that 2,500 miles is equal to 2,653,700 tire revolutions (plus one to get over the finish line).

"We developed great partnerships to help with in-kind costs," noted Fainstein. "For example, the students designed a body fabrication tool that Boeing manufactured at a cost of \$20,000."

With a stage-stop scheduled in Winnipeg, WD also provided Red River College with financial assistance to host the Solar Car Open House and BBQ, and a VIP reception. "WD has always been an excellent supporter of Red River College," said Fainstein.

The Red River Raycer faced many challenges, including unusually cloudy days that made it difficult to charge the batteries. Despite this and some technical problems, the Raycer finished 16th in points and was awarded the Green Award for most fuel-efficient convoy, the KISS Award (Keep It Simple Stupid), Best Workmanship, and Best Mechanical, which shows, as one student noted, that the college's Mechanical Engineering

Technology Department was not outwitted in this world-class field.

For more information on r<sup>3</sup>, visit http://xnet.rrc.mb.ca/solarcar. For information on the North American Solar Challenge, visit www.americansolarchallenge.org.

With financial assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada, the members of the Red River Raycer (r3) Solar Car Team were given a hands-on opportunity to stretch their technical and creative abilities, participate in an international event, and promote the capabilities of solar-powered vehicles.

### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

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# THE ABORIGINAL BUSINESS SERVICE NETWORK helps to increase the ability of Aboriginal people to access capital, and to establish and grow their businesses. Customized business information and resources are provided through Canada Business Service Centres across the West.

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In Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, contact your local Canada Business cervice centre for referral to the nearest Aboriginal resource office, or explore the link above.

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Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (306) 477-7173 or (306) 359-9732
Toll Free: 1 800 879-6331
www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca

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provide enhanced services to francophones including training, business and community economic development, access to capital, information services, marketing advice, networking and mentoring.

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Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (306) 566-6000 Toll Free: 1 800 670-0879 www.ccs-sk.ca

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# The backbone of the western economy: innovation and technology

by Tom Robbins. WD Communications, Ottawa

Simply said, innovation is the act of introducing something new: an idea that is sparked by a simple thought. It is a result of investing in people, knowledge and opportunity—making it one of our greatest national assets. In May 2002, the Conference Board of Canada stated, "innovation is a national and corporate imperative. An essential underpinning to our competitiveness and quality of life."

The same principles of innovation that sparked the industrial revolution in the 18th century are affecting us today. New technologies are changing the way we communicate, deliver goods and services, and perform our daily activities. The technological revolution is upon us.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is working to ensure the West remains on the cutting edge of new technologies and is a world leader in the field

of innovation. In 2004-2005 alone, WD invested \$53 million to support innovation in the West, improve the West's knowledge infrastructure, enhance technology commercialization and adoption, and help communities develop innovation strategies.

Innovative initiatives supported by WD cover a range of technological fields including life sciences (biotechnology, genomics), information technologies, environmental technologies, wireless technology and nanotechnology (molecular-level science).



One of WD's most notable investments is in the Canadian Light Source synchrotron in Saskatoon—Canada's biggest national scientific project in three decades. This stadium-sized facility creates beams of light that are millions of times brighter than sunlight. They isolate the microscopic nature of matter, magnifying it to the level of an atom. The \$174 million project is only the second of its kind in the world, assisting researchers in the fields of biology, chemistry, geology, physics, and medicine to increase their competitive

> edge internationally and create new products and technologies for domestic and global markets.

WD continues to act as a catalyst for innovation in Western Canada through partnerships and strategic investments that encourage technology development and commercialization. This issue focuses on some of these investments that are generating new economic and social benefits that improve our quality of life.

# Access West Spring / Summer 2006

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)



# The Honourable Carol Skelton

Innovation is a vital element in developing regional economies, capitalizing on new opportunities and accessing global markets.

The Government of Canada supports innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit in communities throughout Western Canada—ensuring Canadian ideas are setting the pace on the international stage.

Through its investments, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is working to close the gap between discovering new ideas and marketing them into products and services that benefit all Canadians. We recognize that science and technology are essential components of Canada's future economic prosperity and quality of life.

By investing in projects such as Canadian Light Source synchrotron, environmental technologies, telecommunications research and fuel cell technology, WD is supporting a diversified modern economy in Western Canada.

Knowledge is one of our country's greatest assets, and we will continue to work with our stakeholders, in all fields of research and various industry sectors, to ensure the innovation that stems from this knowledge remains one of the West's leading resources.

The Honourable Carol Skelton, P.C., M.P. Minister of National Revenue and Minister of Western Economic Diversification by Tom Robbins, WD Communications, Ottawa

## Making concepts concrete



Ideas are the essence of innovation. But the gap between taking an idea and turning it into an actual product can sometimes seem quite daunting.

WestLink Innovation Network Ltd. is a member-based organization that bridges this innovation gap in Western Canada. It supports the movement of a new idea from its initial concept, through the research and development phase, and on to a ready-for-market product.

"WestLink is all about growing skills and connecting people," says Derek Gratz, WestLink President and CEO. "It connects skilled professionals in academia with industry, accelerating collaboration and the movement of innovation from the labs and minds of researchers to final products in the marketplace."

The concept of a western Canadian universities-based network was first discussed in 1994 to enhance the technology commercialization capabilities of participating universities and to assist them in developing their own commercialization support programs. Since WestLink was created in 1999, its network has grown from 13 universities to 26 publicly funded institutions that stretch from Victoria to Thunder Bay. Network members include industry affiliates as well as publicly funded research and educational organizations.

Gratz is emphatic about the support

"Seed funding from WD leveraged a broad number of activities, which constitute the networking catalyst community that exists today. kind in Canada and became

a model for similar networks in other regions of the country."

WestLink provides numerous gapfilling programs and services that fall into four categories: networking and communication, building technology commercialization skills and awareness. commercialization facilitation and contract services.

The network also offers the Westlink Technology Commercialization Internship Program (TCIP), which was created to build technology commercialization expertise in Western Canada. TCIP is managed by WestLink in direct collaboration with technology companies, venture capital firms and research technology transfer partners. It gives participants the opportunity to gain new skills, experiences and perspectives over two years through three mentored placements

at a research institution (university, college, hospital or government), a hightech company and a venture capital or commercial financing firm.

More than 75 companies have hosted WestLink interns. Successful graduates have found work in their field of choice and today make up Canada's highly trained and experienced technology management pool.

For more information about WestLink, contact Derek Gratz at (403) 974-8470, ext. 225, or visit WestLink online at www.westlink.ca.



by Cameron Zimmer, WD Communications, Saskatoon

## VIDO finds possible hepatitis C vaccine



Dr. Sylvia van den Hurk, of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization.

The cure for hepatitis C continues to elude scientists, but researchers at the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) have developed the long sought vaccine candidate for the virus

Dendritic cells are key parts of the immune system and necessary in controlling the hepatitis C virus (HCV). VIDO's researchers have employed a technique that uses the dendritic cells of mice to reduce the hepatitis C protein by 100,000 times in infected mice.

This is a much-needed development in the fight against hepatitis C, a blood-

transmitted virus that causes liver disease and can plague victims for a lifetime.

"The vaccine reduced the amount of hepatitis C protein in a highly significant manner," says Dr. Bhagirath Singh, scientific director of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Institute of Infection and Immunity. "This offers a very promising approach to prevent liver disease caused by the virus and to ultimately eliminate it from the body."

VIDO is the first lab in Canada to show that this technique might lead to a vaccine to fight hepatitis C. Its findings were published in the January edition of the Journal of General Virology. The potential vaccine is recognized as a significant accomplishment as researchers have had trouble finding a long-term solution to the ever-changing virus

"The hepatitis C virus is always mutating. For example, one patient can be infected with a strain that spawns sub-strains with different sequences. They are all present at the same time in the same patient," says Sylvia van den Hurk, one of the VIDO scientists who worked on the vaccine candidate.

VIDO estimates that it will take another five years before the vaccine is ready for human testing. Hepatitis C is the leading reason for liver transplants in western countries. The World Health Organization estimates that 170 million people are infected with the disease worldwide, approximately five times more than those with the HIV virus. Worse still, the death toll resulting from hepatitis C is estimated to triple in the next 10 years.

The Government of Canada's CIHR and the Canadian Network for Vaccines and Immunotherapeutics are funding VIDO's research into hepatitis C vaccines. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has invested \$5.6 million in capital funding for VIDO to expand its existing research facilities and a further \$5 million to help construct the International Vaccine Centre.

For more information about VIDO and its research, phone (306) 966-7465 or visit www.vido.org. For more information about CIHR, visit www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

by Rohit Sandhu, WD Communications, Edmonton

# Improved treatment gives hope to patients

When Brenda Frederick was diagnosed with cancer in the upper palate of her jaw in 2001, she knew there would be a long path to recovery. But after having undergone 12 surgeries to reconstruct the entire right side of her face, she wishes it could have been easier.

With the new Medical Modeling Research Laboratory (MMRL) at the Misericordia Community Hospital's Craniofacial Osseointegration and Maxillofacial Rehabilitation Unit (COMPRU) in Edmonton, patients such as Brenda can look forward to a faster recovery.

"The MMRL would have dramatically shortened my reconstructive treatment," says Frederick. "With the new medical modeling lab, the surgeons can look at what needs to be done and then do it."

The MMRL enables surgeons to create three-dimensional virtual and physical models of a patient's head and neck areas. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) helped establish the MMRL by providing \$999,627 in funding to the Caritas Health Group, which operates the Misericordia Community Hospital—one of three Caritas sites.

Dr. Johan Wolfaardt, a founder and director of the Caritas Health Group's COMPRU, explains the benefits of bringing this technology to the clinical environment. "Surgeons can access it directly, and to have three-dimensional virtual and physical models to look at and hold is invaluable because of the information models provide."

COMPRU is a highly specialized unit at the Misericordia Community Hospital

that performs reconstructive surgery for patients who have suffered through cancer or injury.

The addition of the medical modeling lab at COMPRU is resulting in better treatments and improving the quality of life for patients. "We all take our quality of life for granted until it's compromised," says Frederick. "COMPRU helps you overcome the compromises you make during illness."

The medical modeling lab has been very effective in helping surgeons prepare for reconstructive surgeries and in improving treatments. "The technology is no longer seen as disruptive," says Dr. Wolfaardt. "Surgeons have become very familiar with the technology and don't want to operate without it. The medical modeling lab has also attracted specialists in disciplines ranging from computer science to the arts to explore how to maximize use of this new technology."

For patients such as Brenda Frederick, this cross-disciplinary work and technology provide a sense of hope. "So many times, patients don't have a lot of hope or positive expectations," says Frederick. "COMPRU gives them that hope."

For more information on COMPRU, visit www.caritas.ab.ca/compru.

3-D Laser Scanning Station in the Medical Modeling Research Laboratory. The scanner captures non-invasive surface features in 3-D.

by Thorsten Duebel, Chief Economist, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

# The role of small business in Western Canada

The economic research that is part of Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) mandate helps us understand Western Canada, its place in the country, the world, and its challenges and opportunities. Research findings lead to economic development policies and programs that help the West achieve its full economic potential, leading to a stronger national economy.

WD often undertakes research in partnership with external economic experts. The Western Centre for Economic Research (WCER), associated with the School of Business at the University of Alberta, is one of WD's partners. In spring 2005, WD conducted a study with WCER on the role of small business in Western Canada. This study, Revisiting Portraits of Small Business Growth and Employment in Western Canada (an update of a similar 2001 study), offers a sectoral and provincial breakdown of small business growth for the period 1999 to 2004.

The study places emphasis on the high

technology sector and examines the roles of gender and age in the composition of the self-employed. Here are some of the highlights from the report:

- The West has a larger proportion of small businesses than the rest of Canada, reflecting the strong economic growth and entrepreneurial spirit in the region.
- Overall, rural areas in the West depend more on the small business sector than do urban areas.
- The service sector led small business growth in Western

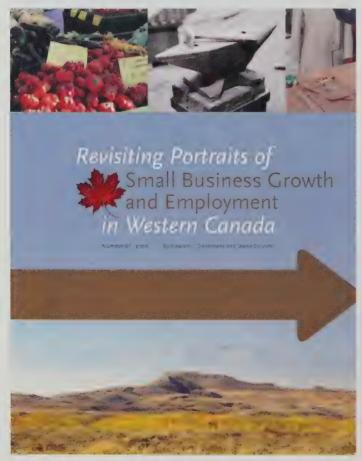
Canada, but more small businesses in the West are engaged in the production of goods than in the rest of Canada.

- The rate of growth of small businesses in Alberta outstripped that of the other western provinces, due to the growth in its energy sector.
- There was ongoing small business growth in the high-tech sector.
- Self-employment is more common in the West than in the rest of Canada. Women make up 45 per cent of the general labour force, but represent only one third of the self-employed. The proportion of self-employed over 55 years of age is twice that of the general labour force.

This study emphasizes the important role of small business in the western Canadian economy. Because of a smaller number of large firms in the region, small businesses act as a key engine of new employment, innovation and international commerce.

WD fosters entrepreneurship and business development to ensure small businesses have access to the services and risk capital they need to serve as a source of employment, growth, and research and development in an economy that is increasingly based on knowledge and technology.

The report is accessible at www.bus.ualberta.ca/wcer.
Hard copies are available from Thorsten Duebel, (780) 495-8259 or thorsten.duebel@wd.gc.ca. ■



# ACCES Saskatchewan

# What's in your toolbox?

by Jean Collins, WD Communications,
Saskatoon

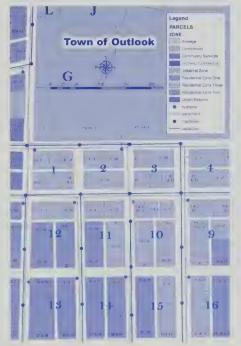
A skilled and experienced tradesperson uses the right tools to efficiently complete projects. In comparison, the home handyman is often frustrated because he's using the wrong tool.

Economic development professionals have a new tool to improve their regional planning exercises. New mapping systems that utilize geographic information systems (GIS) can apply numerous layers of data to create a multi-dimensional map. For example, the GIS tool can identify a specific street address, the registered owner of the land title as well as the service connections, then integrate all of this information on a single map. Such detailed information is a useful tool for municipal planners managing infrastructure services.

Water Wolf Economic Development Inc., located in Outlook, is utilizing GIS technology to develop regional strategies that will encourage and sustain economic growth in west-central Saskatchewan. In partnership with the Mid-Sask Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC), Water Wolf is piloting a GIS data collection system with surrounding

rural municipalities (RMs) to better coordinate regional economic development strategies.

Russ McPherson, project coordinator at Water Wolf, is working with RMs to demonstrate the uses of regional planning. "GIS uses information from several sources and the map is a three dimensional living thing," says McPherson. "It [the map] is only as good as the data from which it is



The Town of Outlook pictured on a GIS map.

constructed. Good data leads to good evidence-based decisions."

McPherson admits the project is in its early stages, and that securing buy-in and building user-friendly computer systems to which RM staff can easily enter data are ongoing challenges. But the collection of data on municipal water, electrical, road, and other infrastructure services can be applied to improve the maintenance and management of sewer and water systems and road grader operations.

GIS mapping also enables economic development personnel and RM councils to obtain a different, much broader perspective when considering buffer zones surrounding controversial projects such as intensive livestock operations. There are also potential benefits that may be applied to dispatching rural emergency services and watershed management practices.

For more information on Water Wolf's GIS pilot project, contact Mid-Sask CFDC at (306) 867-9566.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) provides funding to Saskatchewan's 13 Community Futures Development Corporations. For more information on WD or its partners, contact 1 888 338-9378 or visit www.wd.gc.ca. ■ by Cameron Zimmer, WD Communications, Saskatoon

# University's research leads to practical results

In early 2004, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) provided \$1.3 million to the University of Regina to fund 11 projects that use applied research with practical impacts on multimedia, health, energy, and the environment. Two of these projects are summarized below.

# TERRA puts climate change research on the map

Skim a daily newspaper and you're bound to take in a bewildering array of statistics on crime, global warming, and the economy.

**CLARIFICATION:** Partners for a brighter southwest, Access
Saskatchewan, Winter 2006, page 4

Texts are often shortened in the editing process due to space constraints. The following paragraph is being reprinted in its entirety to eliminate potential misunderstanding:

For example, the Cypress Hills Regional College will look at adjustments to the program offerings to support educational skills and reduce skilled labour shortages within the region. Also, presentations will be conducted at high schools to address skilled labour shortages in the energy sector.



Eleven projects using applied research are being funded by WD at the University of Regina. Photo courtesy of the University of Regina

Two years ago, WD provided over \$127,000 to the University of Regina to set up a computer lab that can take research data from different fields and apply it to Saskatchewan's situation.

The Environmental Research and Response Applications Lab (TERRA) uses high-end Geographic Information Systems (GIS) on powerful computers to combine environmental, economic, and social data on a single map.

To date, 30 geography graduate students and faculty members have embarked on 19 different projects that cover everything from urban littering habits to the effects of burrowing animals on the Saskatchewan Badlands.

The common thread among most of these research projects is an attempt to measure the effects of climate change in Saskatchewan. The lab's major triumph to date involves the use of satellite sensors to track the effects of the El Niño weather system on northern Saskatchewan's forests. This and other TERRA climate change projects have secured the University a Canada Research Chair in Geomatics and Sustainability. The Canada Research Chairs are central to a national strategy of making Canada one of the world's top five countries in research and development.

TERRA's growing reputation has also landed the University a partnership with a leading Canadian GIS company to deliver a course on crime mapping. Every summer, up to 50 police professionals and graduate students from across North America gather at the lab where they learn how to compile crime data and follow its patterns.

The opportunity to work with TERRA's industry-leading geomatics tools and to conduct leading research already has graduate students lining up to use the lab.

"Since the inception of TERRA, graduate student enrollment in the Department of Geography has doubled," says Dr. Joseph Piwowar, co-director of the TERRA lab.

# Cleaner water coming for First Nations communities

Canadians were horrified last October when more than 1,000 people were airlifted from Kashechewan First Nation in northern Ontario because their water was polluted with E. coli bacteria.

University of Regina researcher Dr. Dena McMartin is doing her best to ensure that northern First Nations communities like Kashechewan have a practical treatment system that provides clean water at an affordable cost.

Using \$118,000 from WD and additional funding from Communities of Tomorrow in Regina, a centre of excellence in research, innovation, and economic value for sustainable communities, McMartin is working with two Master of Applied Science students and a Master of Engineering student to design a new water treatment system for First Nations.

"The goal is to try to exploit natural processes in the environment for treating water for human consumption," says McMartin. "The general idea is to grow natural bacteria already present in the water source."

McMartin also plans to test a second process called photochemistry, which exposes water to light that kills dangerous microbes such as E. coli. With these two systems in place, McMartin and her team are beginning on-site tests in collaboration with two Saskatchewan First Nations this year.

"First Nations people realize that to attract new citizens and industry, they need to have access to clean and safe water. Economics, environment, and social value are closely linked to water quality. The First Nations we're working with are very knowledgeable and practical about these needs," says McMartin. "It's been a pleasure to begin working with our First Nations colleagues and we look forward to a continued positive relationship."

For more updates on Dr. McMartin's research, visit the Communities of Tomorrow website at www.communitiesoftomorrow.ca.



Dr. Dena McMartin, professor of Engineering, is conducting water quality field tests in First Nations communities.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

by Heather Waldern-Hinds, WD Communications, Saskatoon

## From junk to joules

What happens when organic material and heat mix? As anyone with a backyard composter knows, the organic matter is broken down into something useful.

The Prairie Agricultural Machinery
Institute (PAMI), in Humboldt, built a
pilot-scale biodigester that applies this
compost principle on a larger scale. A
biodigester uses heat to break down
organic matter such as manure, waste
products from intensive livestock
operations and abattoirs, waste grain
products and municipal wastes. Bacteria
interact with the waste and break it down
into processed organic matter, more
specifically bio-gas and liquid fertilizer.

Biogas can power cogeneration units, which produce both heat and electricity. The heat can be used on-site for buildings and the electricity sold to the local power grid. The biogas can also be cleaned to meet natural gas standards, and then sold to local natural gas suppliers. The organic liquid fertilizer contains almost as many nutrients as raw manure and has significantly less odour. Depending on which waste products are biodigested, the amount and quality of the end product will always be different

PAMI received \$93,069 from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) in 2005 to build the biodigester. The pilot plant can provide design information and test different waste product formulations for the 25 full-scale biodigester facilities expected to be built in Canada over the next few years.

"We have intensive livestock operations showing most of the interest in the

biodigester," explains Patricia Lung, project leader at PAMI. "It makes sense because a biodigester can process raw manure waste to yield heat and "green" energy. Also, the liquid byproduct of of the digester is less aromatic than the raw manure and can be used as a fertilizer supplement. In short, a biodigester is a waste management alternative to the traditional lagoon. It offers possible revenue as well as environmental savings that a lagoon doesn't."

Clear-Green Environmental Inc. developed the province's first biogas plant in 2004. The plant heats a hog barn and, in co-operation with SaskPower, generates electricity. Ben Voss of ClearGreen estimates the plant reduces the fossil fuel energy requirements of the hog barn by 75–90 per cent.

"There are many benefits for both large-scale and small farms," says Voss. "Energy independence is a very important benefit. Odour reduction, reduced pathogens and environmental enhancement are significant reasons for a biodigester as well. The use of biodigested manure as fertilizer also provides significant benefit to farmers in terms of reducing the need for fertilizers derived from fossil fuel."

For more information, visit www.pami.ca or call 1 800 567-PAMI (7264). ■



PAMI biodigester system with silver biodigester in the background.
PHOTO COURTESY OF PAMI

by Jitka Licenik, WD Communications, Ottawa

## YouthBiz Challenge

Budding entrepreneurs from all over Canada may soon be pitted against each other in a race to sell the most ice cream and design the best advertisement.

It's called the YouthBiz Challenge, and it could be coming to an economic development organization near you.

The YouthBiz Challenge was developed by Brittany Staines, Community Economic Development Coordinator with the Sunrise Community Futures Development Corporation (SCFDC) in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

"When I was looking at business education programs in the region, I found 14 high schools that taught accounting while only three offered training in entrepreneurship," said Staines.

This lack of entrepreneurial education led Staines to develop the YouthBiz Challenge. This business competition involves high school students working in teams to complete entrepreneurial tasks and earn the most points.

"Nobody gets fired," laughed Staines.
"It's about working together, trying to be better than all the other teams."

Staines feels giving students a taste of entrepreneurship, without risk to their personal finances, is important. "I think entrepreneurs give so much to the community. They give a community local flavour. Our reason for doing this project was to help students realize their entrepreneurial potential."

The competition is also designed to help economic development organizations make important links with the local business community, the media and the public.



Students from Weyburn Comprehensive High School run an ice cream stand during the YouthBiz Challenge.

When SCFDC first offered the program to Weyburn high school students in May 2005, it was a big hit.

"The whole event ran smoothly," said SCFDC general manager Vic Plante. "Sponsors from the business community were extremely pleased with it and the school would like to repeat the event this year."

But it was more than the local community that was impressed with the program. The YouthBiz Challenge received the Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation in November 2005.

The awards are hosted by the Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan (CFPS), the organization that represents the province's CFDCs.

CFPS volunteer Bill Matlock said the YouthBiz Challenge won for a number of

reasons: "It's a unique approach and a contemporary kind of idea. It's also the kind of thing that can get kids really involved."

Staines was excited about the award, but said the most important outcome for her was something less tangible. "What I found most rewarding was to see the business community realize how talented the students are. The average minimum wage job simply does not tap the potential that young people possess."

She now wants to share the program with economic development corporations everywhere. She plans to market the program using a comprehensive manual, which she has already developed. To order a copy, call (306) 842-8803 or visit www.sunrisecommunityfutures.com.

by Lee Gregg, WD Communications, Winnipeg

## Conquering the digital divide

Coined in the 1990s, the term "digital divide" is used to describe the growing gap between those who have access to computers, the Internet and the skills to use information and communication technology, and those who, for socioeconomic or geographical reasons, have limited or no access.

Enter the age of wireless technology. Shortly after the first municipal wireless networks began appearing, Winnipeg became the first city in Western Canada to develop its own wireless network.

With a \$65,000 contribution from the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement, the University of Winnipeg (UW), Red River College, and the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development (CAHRD) have developed a wireless corridor called Learning CITI (Learning Computer and Information Technology Infrastructure).

Mark Leggott, University Librarian at UW, was involved in planning and implementing the project and is very excited about the potential the wireless grid holds for Winnipeg. "Learning CITI will help bridge the digital divide," said Leggott.

At the heart of the new wireless corridor is a new technology called WiMAX (Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access), which increases the existing wireless range from a base station from 100–300 feet to 2–10 kilometres. "We helped pioneer the WiMAX technology," noted Leggott. "It allows us to transfer data at about 12 times the rate of speed of the traditional WiFi (wireless fidelity)."

The WiMAX technology is so new that it is not yet universally available on laptops. Properly equipped systems



The University of Winnipeg, Red River College, Division of Continuing Education (UW), and the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development have developed Learning CITI, western Canada's first municipal wireless network.

Photo Courtesy of the University of Winnipeg

will be available around mid-2007. For now, WiFi-enabled laptops and bridging technology will allow people's computers to communicate with the Learning CITI WiMAX system.

"Individuals in the downtown area traditionally have a lower percentage of computers in the home," noted Leggott. "By focusing resources on this sector of the population, we take away the barriers of using the Internet and foster opportunities for producing community access and learning, knowledge transfer, personal development, and socioeconomic development."

CAHRD, in partnership with Smart Partners of Manitoba, has set up a computer lending library. One thousand computers are available for people in Winnipeg and surrounding areas.

Broadening the wireless coverage to communities outside Winnipeg will also be explored. "The advantage of wireless is that it doesn't require the cabling associated with traditional methods," said Leggott. "This will be a very cost effective method of extending the Internet into rural areas."

What's next on the horizon? Using solar energy to power the combined WiMAX and WiFi solution—making the system truly wireless.

by Cameron Zimmer, WD Communications, Saskatoon

## **Better oil recovery**

Since it was founded in 1998, the Petroleum Technology Research Centre (PTRC), located in Regina's Research Park, has developed into an international leader in finding new ways to boost oil production and enhance recovery.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has partnered with PTRC by investing over \$4 million in its construction, core research, and the purchase of research tools. These examples demonstrate how WD support is making an impact:

## CO<sub>2</sub> storage debuts at **UN Climate Change** Conference

PTRC ended 2005 on a high note when it showcased its environmentally-friendly oil recovery system at the United Nations Climate Change Conference held late last year in Montreal.

Mike Monea, PTRC's executive director, demonstrated that solvent gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2) can be injected into drying reservoirs to loosen and capture more oil. Early research shows that this procedure could extend an oil reservoir's life by up to 25 years.

This procedure is a solid step toward addressing climate change because the greenhouse gases used in the process are safely stored underground and removed from the environment. Some estimates show that PTRC's major project in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, stores roughly

WD recently provided \$450,000 through

the same amount of CO2 that one third

of Saskatchewan cars produce in a year.

the Western Economic Partnership Agreement to enable PTRC to purchase a grid computing system that uses stateof-the-art simulators to monitor the effects of the CO<sub>2</sub> injection experiments.

## Oil companies launch **JIVE** projects

The PTRC's knack for fine-tuning oil recovery methods is gaining even more support from the petroleum industry through the new Joint Implementation Vapour Extraction (Vapex) program, or JIVE.

Through JIVE, oil companies will set up three of their own field projects that test different ways to use solvent vapour to

remove more oil. The process is known as vapour extraction. Waterflooding is used to extract oil in the lower portions of an oil reservoir, and vapour for the remaining oil in upper portions. The oil thins upon contact with the vapour, and flows to a lower production well, from where it can be pumped to the surface.

WD partnered with Saskatchewan Industry and Resources to provide vapour extraction (Vapex) research with \$750,000 toward the purchase and installation of a 3-D scale Vapex model.

"The 3-D model will be used extensively in the JIVE program," says Brian Kristoff, a PTRC researcher who's leading the JIVE project "It will be used as a scale representation of the actual three field projects that are being evaluated."

For more information about PTRC and its research, visit www.ptrc.ca or call (306) 787-7497.



PTRC building located in Regina.

by Nadia Andersen, WD Communications, Edmonton

# Leading a scientific revolution in all things small

Nanotechnology is on the cusp of transforming the way we live. It offers unlimited possibilities: from improving healthcare delivery to expanding our efficiency in utilizing natural resources.

In essence, nanotechnology creates tiny atomic structures, devices and systems that are able to do more because of their microscopic size. Considering one nanometer is one billionth of a metre... in nanotechnology size, or lack thereof, matters.

The National Research Council (NRC)
- National Institute for Nanotechnology
(NINT) is leading this cutting-edge

science in Canada. Established in Edmonton in August 2001, NINT is the product of a \$120 million strategic partnership between the federal government, the National Research Council, the Province of Alberta, and the University of Alberta. An integrated multi-disciplinary institution, NINT's efforts are concentrated in advanced materials, information and communications technology, energy, life sciences, and medicine.

In order to accommodate the specific needs of nano-researchers, the building was designed to be the 'quietest building in Canada,' accounting for vibration,

acoustical noise, and electromagnetic interference. NINT also houses over \$40 million in leading-edge research equipment.

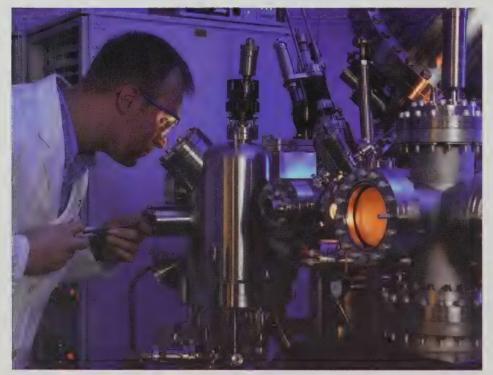
The combination of scientific talent and a wide array of state-of-the-art equipment make NINT a truly innovative Canadian facility. However, what makes this institute different is its commercialization facility—the NINT Innovation Centre.

Designed to be an innovation incubator, the NINT Innovation Centre integrates lab space with office space. Through the use of shared equipment and expertise, it helps companies move products from the lab, to markets, and into our homes.

Funded in part by \$3.8 million from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), the fourth floor of this six-story building is dedicated to transforming scientific discovery into marketable exports.

"Having Western Economic
Diversification Canada join the other
NINT partners was crucial to making the
NINT Innovation Centre a reality," said
Dr. Nils Petersen, Director General of the
National Institute for Nanotechnology.
"We all share the common goal of
having a very positive impact on the
local economy and the Innovation Centre
will help us build a dynamic cluster of
businesses that use nanotechnology."

In addition to investing in the NINT Innovation Centre, WD has contributed over \$12 million to nanotechnology-related facilities at the University of Alberta's campus.



Dr. Jason Pitters, Research Council Officer, Molecular Scale Device Group, NRC-NINT, and the Scanning Tunnelling Microscope (STM).

by Erin Macpherson, WD Communications, Vancouver

# New opportunities for B.C.'s high-tech sector

The high-tech sector in Victoria, British Columbia, is booming thanks, in large part, to facilities available at the Vancouver Island Technology Park (VITP).

VITP provides the space necessary for local technology firms to grow and for new ones to locate. The Park is led by the University of Victoria and is a highly acclaimed centre for academic and biotech excellence. The 27 companies located at the Park employ over 1,200 people and directly contribute over \$80 million annually to the B.C. economy.

The Park is also a working example of environmentally sensitive development in action. It was the first project in Canada and the first renovation in North America to be awarded certification under the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Rating System. The award recognizes the green adaptations within the buildings, including grass and gravel parking lots, storm-water recovery systems, power purchased from methane gas conversions, public transportation agreements, bike paths, and water efficient landscaping.

"Building a 'knowledge community' requires us to provide the physical infrastructure that links regional, national, and international resources with emerging or growing hi-tech companies, which in turn will result in the economic development of our industry," said Dale Gann. Vice-President of VITP.

One of the 27 companies located in the technology park is the University



The 190,000 square foot facility at VITP.

of Victoria-Genome B.C. Proteomics Centre. The Centre has been in operation since 2001 and is the longest operational protein core facility in Canada, providing protein analytical services to Canadian and international academic, industrial, and government laboratories.

"With the help of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and advances in instrumentation and informatics, we are making significant headway in protein research," said Patrick von Aderkas, Facility Director at University of Victoria-Genome B.C. Proteomics Centre. "We are able to identify key proteins in cell responses, not only during normal growth, but

during stresses and diseases. These methods promise to advance research in cancer, disease and applied biology. They will also fuel the discovery of new pharmaceutical applications."

VITP is considered such a success for high-tech activity that its 190,000 square feet of space is reaching full capacity. Due to increased interest in locating tech companies at VITP and to ensure its continued success, the need to develop the Park's remaining 250,000 square foot build-out is becoming more important.

For more information about VITP and its many businesses and research facilities, visit www.vitp.ca.

### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement no. 40063159

If undeliverable please return to:

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CANADA BUSINESS reduces the complexity of dealing with various levels of government by serving as a central resource for Canadian business information. They provide seminars, online business products and information guides on a wide range of business topics.

### www.canadabusiness.gc.ca

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The Business Link (Alberta) (780) 422-7722 Toll Free: 1 800 272-9675

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Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (306) 956-2323 Toll Free: 1 800 667-4374

Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (204) 984-2272 Toll Free: 1 800 665-2019

## THE ABORIGINAL BUSINESS

SERVICE NETWORK helps to increase the ability of Aboriginal people to access capital, and to establish and grow their businesses. Customized business information and resources are provided through Canada Business service centres across the West

### www.cbsc.org/absn/

In Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, contact your local Canada Business service centre for referral to the nearest Aboriginal resource office, or explore the link above.

All British Columbia enquiries can be directed to the B.C. Aboriginal Business Services Network manager. (604) 685-2330 Toll Free: 1 800 551-2276 www.firstbusiness.ca

## COMMUNITY FUTURES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

provide communities outside of major urban centres with strategic economic planning, technical and advisory services, loans to small- and medium-sized enterprises, self-employment programs aimed at youth, and entrepreneurs with disabilities.

### www.communityfutures.ca

Community Futures Development Association of B.C. (604) 685-2332 Toll Free: 1 866 685-2332

Community Futures Network Society of Alberta (403) 851-9995 Toll Free: 1 877 482-3672

Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan (306) 260-2390

Community Futures Partners of Manitoba Inc. (204) 984-2272 Toll Free: 1 877 665-2019

### WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

offices provide customized services to help women entrepreneurs succeed, including business loans, advice and information, as well as networking and mentoring opportunities.

Women's Enterprise Centre (B.C.) (250) 868-3454 Toll Free: 1 800 643-7014 www.womensenterprise.ca

Alberta Women Entrepeneurs (403) 777-4250 or (780) 422-7784 Toll Free: 1 800 713-3558 www.awebusiness.com

Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (306) 477-7173 or (306) 359-9732 Toll Free: 1 800 879-6331 www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca

Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba (204) 988-1860 Toll Free: 1 800 203-2343 www.wecm.ca

## Francophone Economic Development Organizations

provide enhanced services to francophones including training, business and community economic development, access to capital, information services, marketing advice, networking and mentoring.

Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (604) 732-3534 Toll Free: 1 877 732-3534 www.sdecb.com

La Chambre économique de l'Alberta (780) 414-6125 Toll Free: 1 888 414-6123 www.lacea.ab.ca

Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (306) 566-6000 Toll Free: 1 800 670-0879 www.ccs-sk.ca

Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (204) 925-2320 Toll Free: 1 800 990-2332 www.cdem.com







# Western Canada's information technology sector gets big boost

A \$22.3 million investment over five years will enable Canada's largest information and communications technology (ICT) consortium to continue its groundbreaking research

and supplying western Canada's ICT industry with brainpower and innovative technologies.

## New Minister, new approach

At a series of roundtable discussions held across the West and in Ottawa. western Canadians helped define a renewed focus for Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

The Department looked to business leaders, representatives from academic institutions and not-forprofit organizations, and other expert stakeholders for their views on how WD can best serve western Canadians.

The result is a new vision that will produce measurable and lasting economic benefits for the West by focusing on three strategic priorities: diversifying the western economy, strengthening business growth and competitiveness, and building strong economic foundations.



# Access West Spring 2007

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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### Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)



# MESSAGE FROM The Honourable Rona Ambrose

Since elected, Canada's New Government has charted and delivered on a number of priorities that matter to the people of Western Canada — and to all Canadians.

In Western Canada, this means building on economic strengths, capitalizing on opportunity and acting as a catalyst to create a secure economy that is more productive and globally competitive.

We started by refocusing spending to reflect those priorities and reducing the national debt to create a solid base on which to build. We are restoring the confidence of taxpayers by ensuring responsible financial management and keeping the economy strong.

I am delighted to be leading Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) as we make that vision a reality. My combined roles as WD Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs afford me the unique opportunity to create synergies among all orders of government in areas of strategic importance to the West. This will build on the strong federal-provincial-municipal collaboration already fundamental to WD's way of working.

WD has a bold vision for the future, with strategic directions that focus on economic diversification and promoting value-added in traditional industries. Our priority is on the core economic fundamentals that provide good value for taxpayers' money, and generate lasting and measurable impacts.

WD investments enable companies to convert bright ideas into marketable products, which in turn, generate new sources of economic activity, increased productivity and well-paying jobs. I invite you to read on to learn how WD is working with its partners to build a stronger West in a stronger Canada.

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P. President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada,

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification

## Editor's Note New look, same goal

It is in the spirit of change and progress that we're realigning Access West to reflect our new directions – but our goal remains the same: to keep you well informed by sharing information about what we do and how we're making a difference in the lives of Westerners.

We value your input and would love to hear from you. Email us at access.west@wd.gc.ca with your comments and suggestions.



TRI ARS - CONTINUED FROM COVER

The investment includes \$10 million from WD, \$2.4 million each from the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and \$7.5 million from the Government of Alberta.

TRLabs brings industry, government and university partners together to increase the pre-commercial research and development capability of Western Canada's telecommunications industry. Its partnerships are leading to new products and services that are fuelling economic growth and creating jobs. The longer-term impact means stronger economic competitiveness and productivity in the West – and Canada.

## Investment will expand solid track record

The consortium employs more than 200 highly skilled employees in labs in Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, and Winnipeg. Over the past 20 years it has trained 840 university graduates, created 310 technologies adopted by companies and generated more than 160 patents.

## Western-made wireless technology a key asset for global industries

Dr. John Pinkney's Batlan<sup>TM</sup> enables wireless devices to transmit information up to 50 times faster than current technology and extends battery life by up to 100 times. It is also highly immune to interference.

Pinkney spent 12 years at TRLabs, working on wireless technologies and earning his Master's and Ph.D. degrees. In 2005, he co-founded Myotis Wirelss Inc., which is now a TRLabs Industry Associate company developing Batlan<sup>TM</sup> commercial applications to improve home automation, wireless PC connectivity, and medical and security sensor networks.

# New technology used worldwide in line-testing device

As a graduate student at TRLabs Saskatoon, Bernardo Celaya helped develop a new technology that makes it faster and cheaper for telecom companies to locate and diagnose faults in twisted pair lines.

In 2005, Consultronics—now part of EXFO Electro-Optical Engineering Inc.—licensed the technology and hired Celaya to incorporate it into their CableShark testing device, which is sold worldwide.

Twisted pair is the ordinary wire that connects most homes and businesses to the telephone company. Not all lines are suitable for the transmission of high-speed data, however, so wires need to be tested for their ability to meet the requirements of DSL services. Celaya's technology makes it possible to detect faults from a distance of up to five kilometres, reducing the need for service providers to send technicians to subscribers' houses.

For more information, visit www.trlabs.ca. ■

# Converting bright ideas into marketable products

BioMS Medical Corp. has developed a promising treatment for multiple sclerosis that is currently undergoing an international phase III drug trial that will include about 550 patients at 48 trial sites in 10 countries. Cevena Bioproducts Inc. created a nutritional supplement that helps manage cholesterol levels. Scanimetrics Inc. is commercializing a new method of testing semiconductor chips that significantly reduces costs while increasing speed and reliability.

These companies have something in common: Each was created as a result of research undertaken at the University of Alberta, and thanks to a \$15 million investment in TEC Edmonton by WD, even more Canadian research will lead to successful commercial ventures like these.

TEC Edmonton – whose name is an acronym for its goal to support Technology, Entrepreneur and Company development – is a joint venture between the University of Alberta and the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation.

# Historic building to become new home for TEC Edmonton

The federal investment will enable TEC Edmonton to retrofit and expand Edmonton's historic Hudson's Bay building, now called Enterprise Square, to accommodate lab and office space for new companies. The Government of Alberta, the City of Edmonton and the University of Alberta have also contributed funding.

For more information, visit www.tecedmonton.com. ■



## New R&D facility will create vaccines for commercialization

Up to \$25 million from the Government of Canada, including \$1 million from WD, will help the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) build on its proven ability to develop and commercialize vaccines to combat infectious diseases. Since 1975, VIDO has been awarded more than 70 patents and directly started three spin-off companies.

The funding will help establish a new research and development facility at the U of S. The International Vaccine Centre. or InterVac, will be the first of its kind in the world, unique in its focus on creating vaccines for both animal and human pathogens.

Nearly 80 per cent of newly emerged diseases have a link to animals, but there is an international shortage of facilities capable of handling the necessary level of biocontainment to study these pathogens. InterVac will be a fully secure Biosafety Level III facility, allowing researchers to work on threats such as avian influenza and West Nile disease.

This \$25-million investment strengthens the Government of Canada's previous \$24-million contribution to VIDO - including \$5 million from WD

- bringing the total federal investment to \$49 million. Construction is scheduled to begin in Spring 2007 and will be complete in 2010.

## Canadian company to market world's first E.coli vaccine

Bioniche Life Sciences Inc., a Canadian biopharmaceutical company, is set to

begin marketing the world's first E. coli vaccine authorized for field use

The vaccine, developed by VIDO in partnership with the University of British Columbia, the Alberta Research Council and Bioniche Life Sciences Inc. (TSX-BNC), will help prevent contamination of food and drinking water by reducing the amount of E. coli bacteria that passes from cattle into the environment.

"This is the first time people have looked at animal vaccination as a way to reduce environmental contamination to protect humans," said Lorne Babiuk, Director of

The pathogenic form of E. coli bacteria (E. coli O157) can be found in most cattle. Use of manure as a crop fertilizer and run-off from beef and dairy cattle operations are a source of contamination

Postdoctoral fellow Dr. Marianela Lopez and visiting scientist Dr. François Meurens are members of VIDO's Vaccine Development and Neonatal Immunization programs.

for the general environment as well as surface and ground water. Consumption of contaminated food or water can produce severe illness in people, even death.

Bioniche Life Sciences Inc. received preliminary approval for the vaccine from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in December 2006 and will pursue a full licence in 2007. ■



Based in VIDO's Neonatal Immunization program, Monika Polewicz is pursuing an M.Sc. degree in the development of novel vaccine formulations for infants and young children against pertussis (whooping cough).

HEALTH CANADA ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE 2.2 MILLION CASES OF FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS EVERY YEAR, WITH ANNUAL COSTS EXCEEDING \$1 BILLION.



### Technology transfer office extends service across Vancouver Island



#### VANCOUVER ISLAND TECHNOLOGY PARK

an initiative of the University of Victoria

A \$185,000 investment from WD will enable the University of Victoria's Innovation and Development Corporation (IDC) to offer expanded technology transfer services to four other Vancouver Island post-secondary institutions.

"The continued support by both the federal and provincial governments means students and faculty from across Vancouver Island will receive the assistance they need to bring their research discoveries to the marketplace," said University of Victoria President David Turpin. "Each new company established through IDC creates new jobs, generates substantial revenue and provides Vancouver Island with the benefits of our research breakthroughs."

Camosun College, Royal Roads University, Malaspina University-College and North Island College will have access to the services of IDC, which works to move research and innovation into the public and private sector through partnerships, technology licensing and the formation of new spinoff companies.

#### Study quantifies economic impact of UVic research

The funding was announced December 1, 2006, at the University of Victoria's Vancouver Island Technology Park (VITP), whose tenants include several of the 35 spin-off companies created through IDC.

Results of a recent Economic Impact Study were also released at the event. The study, prepared by Masters of Business Administration students Marian de Monye and Amanda Wright, indicates that VITP has created more than 2,000 jobs and had a total economic impact of more than \$279 million in 2005.

VITP, which directly employs 1,300 people, represents the greatest concentration of high-tech companies and workers on Vancouver Island. The Park houses 28 business tenants that represent technology clusters such as fuel cells, new media, wireless, biotechnology, ocean technology and ICT. Many of these businesses began as a result of University of Victoria research.

"The technology park is a powerhouse of jobs and opportunities that has more than lived up to our expectations," said UVic President, David Turpin.

The report predicts even more growth in the next two years.

Jen Reid of the UVic-Genome BC Proteomics Centre at VITP uses a Q-Trap Mass Spectrometer to identify protein in a biological sample. The Centre provides protein academic, industrial and government Anna von Rossum of Immuno-Precise Antibodies visually analyzes a tissue culture in their laboratory. Immuno-Precise, a tenant at VITP, develops and markets antibodies for use in life science research.







# Moving new technologies from mind to market

n. On Grace Unications, Winnibeg

Biomedical Commercialization Canada Inc. (BCC) is helping innovators with new technologies build relationships and link to the global biomedical sector.

"You need to look and act like a professional business and we provide the tools so you can run like a business," said BCC Vice President Marshall Ring. "We offer access to the BCC network, we assist with the commercialization pathway, help mitigate financial risk, and we have a seasoned and successful executive team to provide advice and keep you out of trouble."

BCC offers tailor-made programs to help companies accelerate through the first four stages of growth: investigation, feasibility, development, and market introduction. It also builds the technical, marketing and business capabilities within the company. With \$1.19 million from WD, this national pilot project was able to expand its services.

"The money received from WD went towards information and communication technology infrastructure," said Ring. "We can now offer our clients furnished office space and computers that not only provide access to the Internet and Microsoft Office Applications, but also access to a business-grade Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that includes applications such as payroll, integrated project management, quality systems, bank account management and many others."

Health Media Network, a BCC client, is preparing to launch a new digital health

and wellness information network. The network will provide current information to patients, healthcare workers and administrators in the health delivery field.

"Marshall and the BCC were my hovering guardian angels," said Ron Grouchy, V.P. of Health Media Network. "As an inventor you focus so much on the product that you sometimes forget the essentials of running a business. BCC shows you the bigger picture and makes you look at controls, rules and regulations, and marketing. Their support was instrumental in launching Health Media Network."

Although "Biomedical" is in the company name, this not-for-profit organization is accessible to anyone working to commercialize any new technology.

For additional information, call (204) 272-2403 or visit online at www.biomedcanada.com. ■

ACCORDING TO THE 2006
KPMG STUDY OF MEDICAL
DEVICES PRODUCTION IN
NINE COUNTRIES AND 128
CITIES, CANADA RANKS FIRST
IN THE G7, WITH A 4.1 PER
CENT COST ADVANTAGE
OVER THE U.S. IN WESTERN
CANADA, MORE THAN 200
COMPANIES EMPLOYING
AN ESTIMATED 4,000
PEOPLE ARE DEVELOPING,
MANUFACTURING AND
SELLING THEIR MEDICAL
DEVICES.



The BCC Management team is helping entrepreneurs, start-ups and established firms navigate the pathway to commercial success, sooner. Back Row: Brandon Dix, Director of Information and Communication Technologies; Mark Mathewson, Chief Financial Officer; and Joe Wery, CEO. Front Row: Vera Keown, CISTI Technical Analyst; and Marshall Ring, VP Business Development.



## **Marketing Western** Canada's cost advantages to U.S. businesses

In November 2006, WD released a new publication designed to attract businesses and investment to Western Canada.

Western Canada - Where the Spirit of Innovation Meets a World of Opportunity highlights the advantages U.S. businesses would have if they based their operations in Western Canada.

The brochure is based on data from the 2006 KPMG Competitive Alternatives study, which compares business costs in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific. For the sixth time in a row, Competitive Alternatives ranks Canada as the lowest-cost G7 country in which to do business, with a 5.5 per cent cost advantage over the United States.

#### Publication circulated to Canadian trade offices and consulates in the U.S.

Western Canada stands out with a low cost business advantage. Beyond accessibility to international markets, an abundance of natural resources, a highly supportive infrastructure, access to a highly skilled workforce and an excellent quality of life, the KPMG study notes that western Canadian communities have a significant competitive advantage when compared to American cities in the Pacific and Mid-West regions.

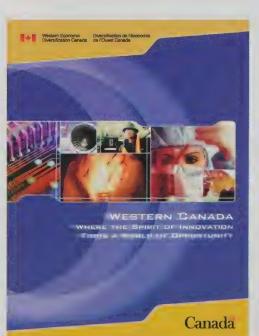
Western Canada - Where the Spirit of Innovation Meets a World of Opportunity highlights those advantages, with

a focus on six sectors: aerospace, medical devices, telecommunications, biotechnology, agri-food value-added and environmental technologies.

The publication, developed in collaboration with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, the Trade Commissioner Service in the U.S., and investment attraction representatives with the western provincial governments, has been circulated to the Canadian Embassy in Washington as well as Canadian Consulates General, Consulates and Trade Offices across the United States.

For a copy of WD's Western Canada - Where the Spirit of Innovation Meets a World of Opportunity, visit www.wd.gc.ca /rpts/research. ■

Canada has the lowest business costs of all G7 countries in sectors such as aerospace and biotechnology. In Western Canada, the average cost of doing business is 5.7 per cent lower than in the U.S.



### 2010 Olympics a \$2-billion golden opportunity

by Kathy Liu, WD Communications, Vancouver

WD has developed a new tool to help western businesses take advantage of opportunities to supply goods and services to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

WD partnered with the B.C. Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Secretariat, 2010 Commerce Centre and Industry Canada to create the 2010 Procurement Handbook. The handbook helps business owners understand the range of opportunities associated with the 2010 Games, and was used in procurement workshops delivered across northern and western Canada.

#### Hands-on workshops

More than 60 workshops have taken place in B.C. and other parts of western

> and northern Canada, to help companies understand the procurement process. Approximately 500 people attended the first 18 sessions. Forty-four per cent of attendees who responded to a survey were not familiar with the procurement process before, while 192 respondents plan to bid on 2010-related opportunities, and



# Trade missions expand markets for composites industry

o, Lee Gregg. WD Communications, Winnipeg

Manitoba's composites companies are taking advantage of trade missions to expand their international markets and forge new ties with their U.S. counterparts.

A successful trade mission jointly organized by the Canadian Consulate General in Detroit, the Composites Innovation Centre, the National Research Council and WD raised the profile of Manitoba's composites industry and led to increased collaboration between the U.S. National Composites Centre

and Manitoba's Composites Innovation Centre.

In 2006, the two centres signed a Letter of Intent to collaborate in the development and commercialization of composite materials and process technologies.

The Composites Innovation Centre is a not-for-profit corporation co-sponsored by private industry and government. Its mandate is to stimulate economic growth through innovative research, development and application of composite materials and technologies for manufacturing industries. WD has

invested \$4.5 million in the centre.

Composites are fibre reinforcements, such as fibreglass or carbon, held together with resin or glue. They replace heavier materials and are used extensively in the aerospace and automotive industries.

The Manitoba composites delegation said the mission was an important team building and networking opportunity.

In 2005, a delegation of 20 people from 11 Manitoba companies participated in the five-day trade mission to Ohio, which featured meetings with U.S. composites industry representatives to exchange information and build trade links

Trade commissioners from Detroit worked closely with WD to plan the trip. Funding obtained through the Enhanced Representation Initiative (ERI) helped lower costs for participants.

Both the trade commissioners and U.S. manufacturing representatives expressed surprise about the size and diversity of the Canadian delegation. Until then, they were unaware of Manitoba's robust composites industry.

### Manitoba industry working with U.S. counterparts

The success of the Ohio mission led to a post-outreach mission in 2006. Trade commissioners from five U.S. consulates came to Manitoba to tour the Composites Innovation Centre and meet with Manitoba industry officials.

A month later, representatives from the National Composites Centre visited their Canadian counterparts to work on a technology transfer project. In partnership with the Composites Innovation Centre, they developed a Canada-U.S. directory to encourage companies on both sides of the border to work together and in May 2006, the two organizations signed a Letter of Intent to formalize their plans to work collaboratively in future ventures.





# Small B.C. company gains momentum in United **States** market

What began as a three-person operation in 1997 has now grown into a company that employs more than 50 people and is gaining momentum in the United States market.

Based in Abbotsford, B.C., Gatekeeper Systems Inc. originally resold brand name video recorders bought from other companies. The company has since changed its business strategy to design and manufacture its own video surveillance products.

#### Supplying the U.S. Air Force

With this new strategy came newfound success. Gatekeeper Systems Inc. recently won a contract, the company's largest to date, to provide highresolution digital video recorders to the U.S. Air Force for use on gunships deployed around the world. Boeing Aerospace is the systems integrator responsible for installing and integrating the digital recorders to the gunships' optics and communication systems.

The Viperfish ASX digital recorder, a product of the company's Deep

Development Corp., will record the Air Force planes in action – everything from escorting convoys and protecting air bases and facilities, to carrying out airstrikes. The recordings will assist the U.S. Air Force in reviewing its operations.

The company has already successfully delivered the first phase of this project.

"The United States Air Force project is an example of the how the Viperfish ASX digital recorder is being used at the highest levels of security," said Doug Dyment, President and CEO of Gatekeeper Systems Inc. "We are excited about the prospects of this contract and look forward to working with Boeing Aerospace and the United States Air Force."

Gatekeeper Systems Inc. has also been successful in selling video surveillance equipment to U.S. companies for use on school buses to identify vandalism and bullying.

The success of the company is in large part due to its ability to find markets for its innovative technology and to adapt them to clients' existing equipment. WD helped them along the way with networking opportunities in Canada

#### Increasing international competitiveness

The Government of Canada is committed to increasing Canada's international competitiveness. Through the Enhanced Representation Initiative (ERI). seven federal departments and agencies, including WD, are working together to advance Canada's advocacy, trade, business development, science and technology, and investment interests in the United States.

and the U.S. through the Enhanced Representation Initiative and, in the past, with support that enabled the company to hire recent graduates to develop technology and international marketing opportunities.

"Our goal is to become a global enterprise that will build employment in the West while supporting our local labour force and providing mentoring programs for all employees," said Dyment.





# Website helps small businesses reach global markets

by Michael Fink, WD Communications, Saskatoon

Small businesses in Saskatchewan and a growing number from across Canada are now selling their products to international markets through Francoboutique.ca, a uniquely Canadian trilingual website where entrepreneurs market their products in French, English or Spanish.

The website was launched by the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan after various entrepreneurs had come to them seeking advice on e-commerce. The organization spent 18 months building the site and recruiting small businesses.

Francoboutique.ca provides a customized storefront where products are sold around the world. While the site's main focus is to sell products, such as clothing, historical prints or educational CDs, some businesses advertise services, such as bed and breakfast accommodations, and consulting expertise.



Pauline Vézina (left) and Maria Lepage (Right) from the Bouquinerie Gravel Bookstore in Gravelbourg, Sask. The store uses Francoboutique.ca to sell its books online.

FRANCOBOUTIQUE.CA PROVIDES
A CUSTOMIZED STOREFRONT
WHERE PRODUCTS ARE SOLD
FROM ANYWHERE IN CANADA
TO ANYONE IN THE WORLD.

### Larger markets for rural entrepreneurs

Rural small businesses have the most to gain from Francoboutique.ca, because it helps them reach markets much larger than those provided by the local community.

"We weren't known outside the province before Francoboutique.ca," explains Pauline Vézina, owner of the Bouquinerie Gravel Bookstore in Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. As the only French bookstore in the province, business was limited before they had an online store.

### Membership growing across Canada

Entrepreneurs are recruited through networking and conferences throughout Canada. More than 70 small businesses are already represented on Francoboutique.ca, including a number from Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador.

For more information, visit www.francoboutique.ca or call 1 800 670-0879.

The Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan is a member of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network. Please visit www.ccs-sk.ca to find out more.

2010 OLYMPICS - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

261 respondents plan to sign up with the 2010 Commerce Centre.

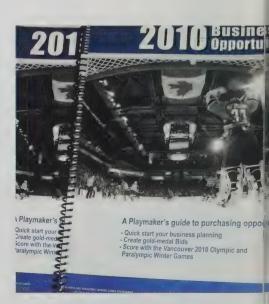
### Capitalizing on Olympic opportunities

It is estimated that the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) will require nearly \$2 billion worth of goods and services, ranging from construction and venue design, to equipment and catering.

"This is clearly an area where there are opportunities for business. You cannot spread this message enough," said Abbotsford Economic Development Manager Jay Teichroeb.

Mills Basic Inc., an office and printer supplier, has already been awarded a contract to supply goods to the Olympics through to 2010.

To download a copy of the handbook, visit www.2010commercecentre.com. For more information on the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, please visit www.canada2010.gc.ca. ■



The 2010 Procurement Handbook provides a how-to guide for business opportunities.



# From junk to joules

by Heather Waldern Hinds, WD Communications, Saskatoon

What happens when organic material and heat mix? As anyone with a backyard composter knows, the organic matter is broken down into something useful.

The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI), in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, built a pilot-scale biodigester that applies this compost principle on a larger scale. A biodigester uses heat and bacteria to break down organic matter such as manure, waste products from intensive livestock operations, abattoirs, waste grain products and municipal wastes. Bacteria interact with the waste and break it down into processed organic matter, more specifically biogas and liquid fertilizer.

Biogas can power co-generation units, which produce both heat and electricity. The heat can be used on-site for buildings and the electricity sold to the local power grid. The biogas can also be cleaned to meet natural gas standards and then sold to local natural gas supplies. The concentrated organic liquid



Cudworth Pork Investors Group (CPIG) biogas plant.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CLEAR-GREEN ENVIRONMENTAL



PAMI biodigester system with silver biodigester in the background. PHOTO COURTESY OF PAMI

fertilizer contains the same amount of nutrients as raw manure and has significantly less odour. Depending on which waste products are biodigested, the amount and quality of the end product will always be different.

#### Biodigester produces heat and 'green' energy

PAMI received \$93,069 from WD in 2005 to build the biodigester. The pilot plant can provide design information and test different waste product formulations for the 25 full-scale biodigester facilities expected to be built in Canada over the next few years.

"We have intensive livestock operations showing most of the interest in the biodigester," explains Patricia Lung, project leader at PAMI. "It makes sense because a biodigester can process raw manure to yield heat and 'green' energy. Also, the liquid product off of the digester is less aromatic than the raw manure and can be used as a fertilizer supplement. In short, a biodigester is a waste management alternative to the traditional lagoon. It offers possible revenue as well as environmental savings that a lagoon doesn't."

"The benefits of this type of technology are far reaching," said Clayton Sparks of Clear-Green Environmental in Saskatoon, which works with the technology. "Clear-Green operates the only fullscale biodigester in Saskatchewan. In co-operation with our host-farm Cudworth Pork Investors Group (CPIG) and SaskPower, we are able to produce renewable energy, reduce dependency on fossil fuels, decrease odours at the site and help protect the environment by reducing greenhouse gases."

To learn more about PAMI, visit www.pami. ca or call 1 800 567-PAMI (7264). For more information on Clear-Green Environmental, visit www.clear-green.com.



#### Building a stronger West, today and for the future

In December 2006, WD tabled its fourth Sustainable Development Strategy in the House of Commons along with other federal departments and agencies. The strategy, Working Towards a Sustainable West, details the department's plan to further integrate sustainable development practices into its policies, programs and day-to-day operations.

WD's sustainable development activities focus on three key areas:

- Investing in technologies that promote environmental sustainability,
- Raising awareness among external partners and clients, and
- Making its own day-to-day operations more environmentally friendly.

To read WD's Sustainable
Development Strategy 2007-2009,
visit www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/strategies/
sd/default\_e.asp

Educating for a sustainable future

by Lee Gregg, WD Communications, Winnipeg

Notre Dame Used Oil & Filter Depot is one of 53 ecocentres in Manitoba that encourage people to recycle used oil products. "Many people are unaware of the legal requirement to recycle, and of the service I provide," said owner Jean Dizengremel. "These materials must be disposed of properly so they can be recycled into useful products, instead of threatening our environment. Educating others is a big part of my business."

Dizengremel emigrated from France to Canada in 1995. In May 2005, he purchased the local ecocentre and scrap yard, and refocused the business solely on the collection of used oil products.

"The fact is that nobody can ignore the urgency of a sustainable ecosystem," noted Dizengremel. "Some countries

are more advanced, like those in northern Europe, but this is a must for everyone, especially in a place like Manitoba where the watershed is so large." CDEM, A FRANCOPHONE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ORGANIZATION, IS A MEMBER
OF WD'S WESTERN CANADA
BUSINESS SERVICE NETWORK,
WHICH OFFERS OVER 100 POINTS
OF SERVICE ACROSS THE WEST.

### Stewardship program promotes recycling

In 1997, the Manitoba Association for Resource Recovery Corporation (MARRC) was established to develop a stewardship program for used oil, oil filters and oil containers. The notfor-profit organization consists of manufacturers and marketers of oil products in Manitoba. They report to Manitoba Environment, a provincial department that maintains a registry of licensed return depots, ecocentres, carriers, and processor/end-use receivers of used oil products.

Dizengremel explains MARRC's environmental program to clients and sets up a 250-gallon tank for oil, barrels for oil filters, and bags for oil containers. During the first year in business, Dizengremel was able to increase collection by 30 per cent, with the help of employees Luc Duffault and Raymond Lemoullec.

Dizengremel also received help from the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM) to fine-tune his business and financial plan. "CDEM helped me to be sure I was making a sound business decision."

A sound business decision has made it easier for others to make sound environmental decisions. For information on the services offered by Notre Dame Used Oil & Filter Depot, call (204) 248-2110.

The potential of a single litre of used oil contaminating one million litres of drinking water keeps Jean Dizengremel (pictured here) and his employees hard at work.





# Aerospace training school expands

by Jillian Glover, WD Communications, Vancouver

Vancouver International Airport's
South Terminal is undergoing a facelift
to accommodate Canada's largest
aerospace training school, thanks to
a \$2-million investment from WD.
The renowned British Columbia
Institute of Technology (BCIT) School
of Transportation is expanding its
aerospace campus at the South Terminal
with the addition of a new 300,000square-foot facility.

"The support from Western Economic Diversification Canada is an investment in education and is crucial support for our new Aerospace Technology Campus," said Lane Trotter, Dean of the BCIT School of Transportation.

The new campus includes an air traffic controller training centre, which makes it possible for BCIT to launch new programs in ambient intelligence and integrated transportation security—both of which allow monitoring of people and cargo.

"It is vital that Canada has a highly skilled air traffic workforce that can keep up with the increasing demands of safety and security in our airports," said the Honourable David Emerson, Minister of International Trade



The future of BCIT's aerospace campus is so bright that the students, teachers and partners are all wearing shades.

BRITISH COLUMBIA IS

GAINING A REPUTATION FOR

ITS GROWING AEROSPACE

INDUSTRY, WHICH GENERATES

\$1.25 BILLION A YEAR AND

EMPLOYS 10,000 PEOPLE AT

MORE THAN 200 COMPANIES.

and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics.

### **Expanded training** opportunities

The campus will boost the school's ability to offer a range of certificate, diploma and degree programs in aircraft maintenance, engineering, airport maintenance and flight operations.

BCIT's reputation for delivering highquality aerospace training programs coupled with the growing demand for skilled workers has people flocking to the program.

Students pursuing technology careers in the aviation and aerospace industries can also access BCIT training at the Kelowna International Airport. WD partnered with the Government of B.C. to invest \$3 million in a joint venture between BCIT and Kelowna Flightcraft Ltd. to construct a hangar and training facility on-site at the airport. The 27,000-square-foot facility maintains large Boeing aircraft and delivers Transport Canada-approved training in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering.

# New Canadians fill labour and skills gaps

The Immigrant Access Fund Society of Alberta (IAF) will be able to help more foreign-born professionals apply their skills in Canada with \$400,000 from WD.

IAF provides loans of up to \$5,000 to help internationally-trained professionals—such as doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants, engineers and geologists—complete their accreditation, so they can achieve their full potential in Canada. Eligible expenses include study and examination fees or short-term upgrading.

# Immigrants help fulfill Canada's economic potential

The 20,000 immigrants with postsecondary education who came to Alberta between 1997 and 2001 had hopes of a bright future in their new country. However, challenges in having their foreign credentials recognized often meant they were unemployed or under-employed.

Meanwhile, Western Canada is facing a growing labour and skills shortage that is hampering productivity and growth. In Alberta, an estimated 400,000 new jobs will be created between 2004 and 2014. Over the same timeframe, only 300,000 new workers are expected to enter the workforce.

Programs like IAF are helping address the issue by fast-tracking the integration of new Canadians' knowledge and skills into the workplace.

# Training provides skilled workers for northern businesses

by Michael Fink, WD Communications, Saskatoon

Two training programs, funded through the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement, are increasing the number of skilled workers and helping small businesses in the North meet the demands of a growing economy.

The five-year, \$20 million agreement between WD and the Province of Saskatchewan, in cooperation with representatives of northern communities, is improving regional economic infrastructure, employment prospects, educational and business expertise. It will also increase research and industry innovation, and improve the region's ability to attract business investment.

#### Ready-to-Work in tourism

The Ready-to-Work Tourism Careers program in La Ronge, Creighton, Stony Rapids and Beauval is helping to meet the demand for qualified front-line staff in Saskatchewan's rapidly-growing \$1.4 billion tourism industry.



# Northlands College

The program, managed by the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council on behalf of the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, gives young northerners both the knowledge and the hands-on experience to succeed.

Participants begin with seven to eight weeks of classes followed by four weeks of skills training. Once training is complete, participants enter the workforce, with a coach/mentor monitoring their performance for a minimum of 20 weeks and providing tips on how to succeed on the job. Organizers are targeting an 80 per cent employment rate among graduates. Already, of the 18 students who completed classroom and workplace training in La Ronge, 16 are employed.

For more information, contact the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council at 1 800 331-1529 or visit www.stec.com

#### Childcare workers in demand

A program offered by Northlands College is helping to meet the need for qualified childcare workers in Saskatchewan. New provincial regulations, requiring 20 per cent of full-time workers at childcare facilities to have diplomas, have increased the demand province-wide.

The First Nations Childcare Diploma program gives childcare workers and students the opportunity to earn a professional qualification, making it easier to find employment after graduation.

"It was already a priority for the community to train professional childcare workers," explains Peter Mayotte, Regional Director for the central region of Northlands College. "The legislation puts it [the training] to a higher priority."

For more information, contact Northlands College in Air Ronge at 1 888 311-1185. ■



# **Business** owners learn from the experience of others

The Aboriginal Business Service Network, a member of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network, provides a number of guides, online tools and training sessions to help Aboriginal people integrate into the economy through small business ownership.

For example, conferences, sharing circles and networking sessions organized by The Business Link's Alberta Aboriginal Business Service Network (Alberta ABSN) incorporated the Aboriginal tradition of storytelling to help business owners learn from the experience of others.

Aboriginal entrepreneurs from across the province took part in these gatherings, which often focused on financing and staffing.

#### Financing and staffing are two key challenges

Paul Chateau, President of Chateau Communications Group Ltd. shared his story of diversifying his Calgary/ Edmonton marketing and consulting firm by purchasing a co-operative advertising magazine, Finest Values and Savings, in 2003.

"Securing financing was definitely a challenge I faced, but it meant working



Paul Chateau, Métis, operates Chateau Communications Group Ltd. and is the Alberta publisher of Finest Values and Savings, a co-operative advertising magazine.

diligently with Aboriginal Business Canada and Apeetogosan Métis Development Inc. to put the deal together," he explained. "I'm living my dream and I encourage others to follow theirs."

Another story came from Gerry Gionet, President of AQUA Industrial Ltd., an Aboriginal-owned and operated enterprise in Fort McMurray.

AQUA provides structural steel fabrication and steel erection services to the oil sands industry. With more than 330 employees, finding the best people is a challenge for Gionet, particularly in today's competitive labour market.

"We endeavour to train, coach and mentor all our staff to be ambassadors in the community, as well as valued employees in the regions where AQUA performs work," said Gionet.

For more information about the Aboriginal Business Service Network, visit www.cbsc.org/absn.

#### **Aboriginal** participation key to fulfilling economic potential

The Canadian Chambers of Commerce estimates that a lack of Aboriginal participation in the economy costs the country approximately 1.5 per cent of its GDP, or half of its projected growth for 2008. The affect is even more pronounced in Western Canada, where 62 per cent of Canada's Aboriginal population lives.

As skills and labour shortages continue to grow, increasing the participation of Aboriginal people is essential to the West's ability to fulfill its economic potential.



# Videoconferencing expands access to training opportunities

by Linda Chorney, The Business Link

Business information and interactive training opportunities are available to Alberta's small business community through a videoconferencing network, established with support from WD.

The network, created under the banner of the Entrepreneurship Learning Centre (ELC), connects 28 uniquely equipped business development centres that use IP-based video conferencing equipment to educate and communicate with entrepreneurs across Alberta.

The ELC brings together The Business Link in Edmonton, the Alberta Women Entrepreneurs, le Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, Community Futures Alberta along with Community Futures offices across the province. Since it was established in 2004, the ELC has connected more than 11,000 small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

### Connecting small business owners

Videoconferencing allows users to participate in seminars, obtain advice from The Business Link's guest advisors and receive business program information by attending videoconferences hosted by their local office.

Paul Pelletier, General Manager of Community Futures St. Paul-Smoky Lake Region, recognizes the value connectivity brings to his region. "I have satisfied clients who save a great deal of money thanks to this service and even make money because of it," Pelletier said.

## Using cutting-edge technology

In northern communities, entrepreneurs may find traveling long distances for training difficult, particularly in winter. This was the case for Mike Osborn, General Manager of Community Futures Northwest Alberta in High Level. "The ELC's videoconferencing capability provides our business community with quality information that we can access without having to travel very far at all," he said.

That's why The Business Link is working to create new business tools that use cutting-edge technologies. Building on the popularity of "pod casting" or "RSS feeds," The Business Link is developing services using these new technologies, called eBundle for "entrepreneur bundle." The eBundle is a syndicated web-based information package used to display various types of resources on a specific business topic. It is designed to provide "quick-to-learn, quick-to-use" information over the Internet, easily accessible by business owners in multiple Web locations.

To find out more about videoconference sessions offered in Alberta, visit www.elcnetwork.ca. ■





# Network strengthens small business competitiveness

The Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN), a partnership of more than 100 business service offices supported by WD, is helping Western Canada's small businesses rise to the challenges of the global economy.

Factors such as outsourcing, corporate concentration, and intense competition for markets, investment dollars and skilled labour are changing the face of business — meaning that owners need to adjust in order to survive.

The WCBSN provides access to business information, training, advisory services and capital, helping small business succeed and access new markets at home and around the world.

WCBSN partners include Canada Business offices and their Aboriginal Business Service Network, the Women's Enterprise Initiative, Francophone Economic Development Organizations and Community Futures Development Corporations.
Together, the partners provide more than 100 points of service where western small businesses can obtain the business information and resources they need to thrive.

For more information on the services of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network, or to find an office near you, visit: www.wd.gc.ca/serv or www.canadabusiness.ca.

# Trade mission nets international accounts for Manitoba entrepreneur

Like many new parents, Heather Campbell-Dewar was astonished to discover how many things a small child requires. "I was attending an event and had my hands full with a baby, diaper bag, purse, camera and other parenting necessities," she said. "I kept thinking that there had to be a better way."

Using the services of the Canada-Manitoba Business Service Centre, she began researching the possibilities of

AT THE CANADA-MANITOBA
BUSINESS SERVICE CENTRE,
CAMPBELL-DEWAR ATTENDED
SEMINARS ON EXPORTING.



manufacturing a bag that would help organize active families.

With a long list of "must have" features, Campbell-Dewar approached a manufacturer to produce a prototype and in March 2003 Baby Sherpa, named after the Sherpa guides in the Himalayans, was born.

She attended a number of Canada
Business seminars on exporting, and
was directed to a trade mission in
Chicago that resulted in new accounts.
Those accounts grew to the point where
a U.S. sales office was opened to handle
more than 150 stores carrying Baby

Founder Heather Campbell-Dewar and her daughter Camryn proudly display the Baby Sherpa and the Short Haul Sherpa.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WINNIPEG FREE PRESS, APRIL 10, 2006, REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.

Sherpa. Her products are also carried at Australia's Babies Galore chain store and Britain's Green Baby.

Described by England's Grove Magazine as the James Bond of Backpacks, the four-in-one Baby Sherpa makes it easy to organize everything babies and their parents require, and is the right size for carry-on luggage for all airlines.

For more information, call 1 888 333-3424 or visit www.babysherpa.com. ■



NETWORK - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

# B.C. loan recipients eye inter-provincial markets

Nana's Kitchen & Hot Sauce Ltd. began when sisters Nasim Dhanji and Shelina Mawani recognized the commercial possibilities of their homemade hot sauce, popular among friends and family. They decided to bottle the sauce for sale and try their hand at creating a niche market for exotic flavours.

The combination of Dhanji's talent in production and management and Mawani's business and marketing skills allowed them to diversify their product line in a few



short years. Apart from the signature Pili Pili (Swahili for "chili") hot sauce, Nana's Kitchen offers other sauces, curry and butter chicken pastes, and a range of frozen products like wraps, snacks and samosas.

With a loan from the Women's Enterprise Centre, their business has been growing steadily since 2000. They now operate out of a 9,000-square-foot facility in Surrey, B.C., employing 19 full-time staff.

Their products are found on the shelves of major B.C. grocery chains, such as Safeway, IGA and Save-On-Foods, as well as local ethnic markets and specialty food stores. Building on their success, Dhanji and Mawani are trying to break into markets in Alberta and Ontario.



Sisters Shelina Mawani and Nasim Dhanji are the driving force behind the success of Nana's Kitchen & Hot Sauce Ltd.

# Saskatchewan entrepreneur helping Westerners access China markets

The advice Gang Lee and his wife Rebecca Dong received from the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC) resulted in more than just one successful business. The positive experience inspired Rebecca to create a second venture that will help Canadian companies connect with more opportunities in China.

The pair originally approached CSBSC for research assistance and marketing

advice for their business, Lee's Goldfish Hobbyist Aquarium, which imports and breeds goldfish and tropical fish from China. The business addresses a gap in the Saskatoon pet market, where large companies have been reluctant to build distribution facilities. Less than a year after opening, product capacity and sales volumes had doubled.

Rebecca was so impressed with the results, she approached the CSBSC with another idea. With its help, Rebecca tapped into marketing research, seminars and other resources that enabled her to launch Martdirect Consulting, which helps Canadian companies establish distributorships and locate suppliers in China, and provides marketing and consulting advice to companies seeking export business in China.



NETWORK - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

#### **Business support** helps Alberta entrepreneur break into U.S. market

A loan and business advice from Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) is helping three Calgary women expand distribution of their innovative product.

Marci Andrews, Nancy Scott and Jana Sinclair are the creators of HealthPod Baby, a personal organizer that brings all a child's vital health records together in one place. The device ensures parents have access to critical details, even during midnight visits to the emergency

The entrepreneurs say AWE's business planning and marketing advice was critical to the success of their launch in the spring of 2005 and they're now ready to establish Canada-wide distribution and to enter the U.S. market.

For more information, visit www.healthpod.ca.



HealthPod Baby founders from left to right: Nancy Scott, Jana Sinclair and Marci Andrews.

# 100% made-in-Canada eco-cabin exhibition ready for global frontiers

by Laura Francis-Lamb,

What happens when you combine creativity, ingenuity and a passion for smart, eco-friendly living? A sophisticated mobile exhibition in the form of a wholly Canadian cabin that has captured the imagination of Canadians and is about to take the world by storm.

The 480 square-foot All Terrain Cabin is fully equipped for off-the-grid living for a family of four - and even a pet.

Using 100 per cent Canadian goods - roughly 75 per cent of them from Western Canada – this compact abode was constructed by a Vancouver-based design group not with sales in mind, but with the vision of showcasing Canadian ingenuity in design and innovation.

The BARK Design Collective, a non-profit organization, began the project two years ago after sparking the interest of the more than 50 leading edge Canadian companies that contributed products to the exhibition. With the help of \$163,000 from WD, the cabin is now a reality and en route to show the world what Canada is made of.

The All Terrain Cabin conforms to ISO container shipping standard and can



Now on a four-year trek throughout Canada and the world, the All Terrain Cabin has already drawn crowds in Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa and is set to tour the United States, Europe and Asia.

be transported by boat, truck, train or even helicopter. When deployed, the unit triples in size and comes outfitted with such eco-friendly features as a composting toilet, two large water holding tanks, and a filtration system that consists of UV light to kill bacteria and micro filters to pull out sediment. Energy and heat are provided by a biodiesel generator and by large photovoltaic panels, which are also used to recharge batteries.

Find out more about this and other exciting BARK Design projects at www.barkbark.ca.

MISCOVER HOW OUR BUSINESS SERVICE OFFICES CAN HELP YOU START OR GROW YOUR BUSINESS!

# RETROSPECTIVE

# Twenty years of building a stronger West, and a stronger Canada

2007 marks WD's twentieth year of building a stronger, more prosperous West. This milestone made us think back to our early investments and their impact on the economy – and the people – of the West. Here's one investment from over 15 years ago that is seeing significant payoffs today.

WII - 1 - 11 - 1

Seeing an opportunity for growth in Manitoba's fledgling life-sciences sector back in 1992, WD provided \$522,000 to Technology 2000 Inc., a subsidiary of the St. Boniface Hospital focused on commercializing technologies developed at the hospital's research centre.

One prototype that began at the research centre more than ten years ago has since evolved into market-ready technology, multi-million dollar sales, dozens of jobs and the promise of further growth.

Intelligent Hospital Systems, a Winnipeg-based medical device company, is preparing for commercial production of its automated intravenous filling units. RIVA, for Robotic Intra

Venous Automation, will be used by hospital pharmacies to automatically and accurately prepare IV syringes and IV bags. The robotics system will reduce errors and improve quality control as well as patient safety.

Today, after more than a decade of finetuning its technology, the company is set to begin construction on a 15,000square-foot state-of-the-art production facility and more than double its workforce from 25 to 60.

Already two of the \$1-million units have been sold to the University of California, with more sales on the horizon. Kevin McGarry, CEO of Intelligent Hospital Systems, said the company hopes to ship up to 16 more units in 2008.

"RIVA is a world-class hospital pharmacy automation product that is changing the way North American hospitals compound intravenous medications for their patients. Safety and efficiency are the two primary reasons that hospitals are purchasing RIVA units. With manufacturing taking place in Winnipeg, a significant number of new jobs have been created. None of this would have happened without the initial investment from Western Economic Diversification Canada."

"This is an outstanding success story for WD and for Manitoba's life sciences cluster. While WD's investments do not always generate immediate results, persistence often leads to substantial payoffs. In this case, support during the concept and development phases led to significant economic benefits 15 years later."

The Honourable
Rona Ambrose, President of
the Queen's Privy Council
for Canada, Minister of
Intergovernmental Affairs
and Minister of Western
Economic Diversification

#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement no. 40063159

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# Access West



Campbell River kids greet ship at the opening of the first-ever Aboriginal-owned cruise ship terminal

# The first Aboriginal-owned cruise ship terminal opens

o. Allin G. ver

Each year, over a million cruise ship passengers travel within a few hundred metres of Campbell River on their way to Alaska. But in June 2007, Campbell River's ship finally came in.

Thanks to the determination of the Campbell River Indian Band, the

community opened the world's first Aboriginal-owned and themed cruise ship port-of-call, the Wei Wai Kum terminal. The opening celebration was marked by the arrival of Regent Cruises' 700-passenger Seven Seas Mariner.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 1

# Western companies vying for billion-dollar defence contracts

by Laura Francis-Lamb

Canadian aerospace and defence companies are vying for multi-billion dollar military contracts in Canada and the U.S. Western Canadian companies are no exception.

## Canadian industry to benefit from "Canada First"

Under the Canada First Defence Strategy – a plan to boost the Canadian Forces' ability to independently protect national sovereignty and security – the Department of National Defence (DND) will purchase an estimated \$17.1 billion worth of equipment and support over the next three years.

Continued on page 4

# Access West

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)



# MESSAGE FROM The Honourable Rona Ambrose

What do you get when you combine the energy of entrepreneurs with the creative genius of scientists? Spartan apples, Canola oil, Marquis wheat and the world's first bus powered by hydrogen fuel cells – products that impact people and industries all over the world. This innovative spirit has placed Western Canada at the forefront of global research and development.

Maintaining that momentum is essential in today's increasingly complex global market, where science and technology commercialization are vital to improving our environment, health and competitiveness.

Canada's national Science and
Technology Strategy is laying the
foundation for an economy based
on innovation. In the West, Western
Economic Diversification Canada (WD)
supports the strong research capacity
and entrepreneurial drive of westerners,
acting as a catalyst for projects that
stimulate sustainability and growth.

WD's investments build on partnerships among all orders of government, industry and research institutes with projects such as the first-ever Aboriginal owned and themed cruise ship terminal in Campbell River, and the University of Calgary's revolutionary neuroArm that is transforming brain and spinal cord surgery.

WD is proud to acknowledge the enormous contribution of entrepreneurs and businesses to Canada's prosperity during Small Business Week – and every other week.

Through our partners in the Western Canada Business Service Network, WD provides entrepreneurs with the services and advice they need for business success. Our micro loan program, delivered in partnership with financial institutions in cities across the West, help higher risk startups access the funding needed to realize their potential.

In building a stronger West, we are building a stronger Canada.

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P. President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada,

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification

#### Editor's Note

Wo're 20 years old!

In August, WD celebrated 20 years of helping grow and expand Western Canada's economy.

Since its establishment in 1987, WD has invested over \$4 billion in the West toward projects that act as a catalyst for a more robust and diversified economy.

We value your input. Email us at access.west@wd.gc.ca with your comments and suggestions.



### Alberta leads trade mission to California

By Loreen Lennon

Accompanying her provincial counterparts on the Alberta-led trade and investment mission to California in June, WD Minister Rona Ambrose spent four days in San Francisco immersing herself in the entrepreneurial energy of Silicon Valley while promoting the advantages of investing, living and doing business in Alberta, and the West.

"California has clearly set the international standard in developing, financing and commercializing new technology, so there is much we can learn from each other," said Minister Ambrose.

Addressing a luncheon audience of about 100 at SRI International – an independent, not-for-profit research institute - Minister Ambrose spoke of commercializing innovation through partnerships and shared Canada's new national Science and Technology (S&T) Strategy.

This was WD's third time participating in the Alberta mission – the first with a federal minister participating - and members agreed it was a powerful learning and partnership-building opportunity. Together, Minister Ambrose and Alberta's Advanced Education and Technology Minister, Doug Horner, sought to learn more about the California "ecosystem" that has been instrumental in creating and growing technology companies.

At a WD-hosted stakeholder dinner, local high-tech industry representatives and entrepreneurs shared their expertise on commercialization

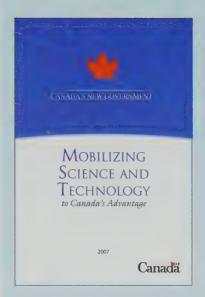
and business growth. U.S. venture capitalists expressed their enthusiasm for Canada's Centres of Excellence, underlining the importance of talent and good management in attracting investment. They also underscored Canada's need to strengthen its culture of entrepreneurship and build its fundmanagement expertise.

According to Minister Ambrose, the joint mission was a success on several counts: it promoted collaboration between innovators on both sides of the border; WD and the Government of Alberta strengthened links with each other and with California venture capitalists, business leaders and Canadian expatriates; and it provided insight into implementing the S&T Strategy.

By bringing their message directly to California, mission organizers expect local interest in investing in Western Canada's red-hot innovation and advanced technologies sectors to heat up.



Marc LePage, Canadian Consul General to San Francisco / Silicon Valley, Minister Ambrose and Alberta Minister Doug Horner at a special Canada Day celebration hosted by the San Francisco Consulate General.



#### National S&T strategy a blueprint for a more competitive West

Prime Minister Harper recently released a new national Science and Technology Strategy that lays the foundation for a more competitive and innovative economy.

Entitled Mobilizing Science and Technology to Canada's Advantage, the strategy creates the lowest tax rate on new business investment in the G-7 as well as reduces personal income tax to ensure Canada attracts and retains highly skilled workers. It also maintains Canada's G-7 leadership in public R&D performance and ensures our universities have leading-edge research equipment and facilities so they remain among the world's best.

To support the S&T strategy in the West, WD is partnering with the provinces, industry and research institutions in areas where the region has the potential to be world-class leaders - such as information and communications technology, health and life sciences, and natural resources and energy.

For more information, visit www.ic.gc.ca/s&tstrategy. ■



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# Canada and U.S. Defence purchases mean big business

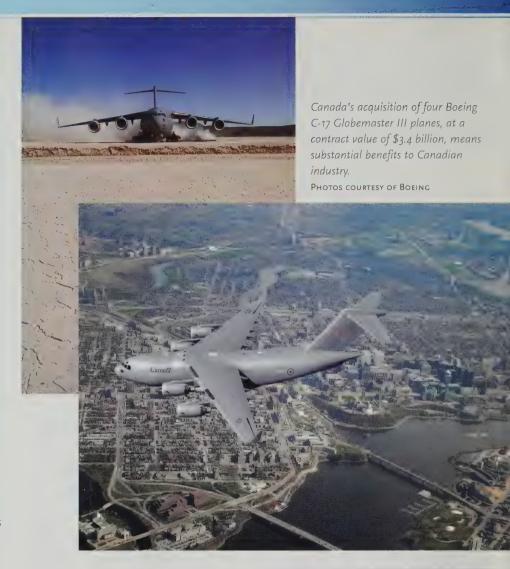
Major purchases already underway include Boeing C-17 strategic airlift aircraft and Chinook medium- to heavy-lift helicopters, Lockheed Martin C-130J tactical airlift aircraft, new trucks for the Army and a new fleet of supply ships for the Navy.

Not only does Canada First mean a stronger, more self-reliant and combatcapable armed forces, it also means enormous benefits to Canadian industry. Government "Industrial and Regional Benefits" (IRB) policy requires contractors to do business in Canada, ensuring Canada gets extra value for money spent in the form of industrial and regional investments.

### WD – connecting the key players

In the West, companies are competing for contracts and WD has a key role to play. WD is working with other federal departments, provincial governments, industry associations and firms to connect potential prime contractors with western companies, and to ensure the interests of western industry are taken into account at every stage of the bid process.

WD is on the ground working with western companies to maximize their participation in Canada's airlift fleet and



helicopter purchases. This summer, WD organized a mission to the U.S. to link western Canadian companies with U.S.-based Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

Vic Gerden, Executive Director of the Manitoba Aerospace Association, knows the value of networking as part of maximizing opportunities and expanding Manitoba's aerospace industry.

"Visits to Boeing and Lockheed Martin allow us to showcase our province's capabilities," said Gerden. "With these large U.S. companies looking to do business in Canada as part of their bid, we're working with WD to ensure that Manitoba and western Canadian companies are well positioned to win contracts associated with these major national procurements."

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE MET WITH 30 CANADIAN
COMPANIES, OF WHICH 11 ARE
BASED IN THE WEST:

ADVANCED COMPOSITE (MB)

AERIAL 51 LTD. (AB)

DYCOR TECHNOLOGIES LTD. (AB)

GENERAL DYNAMICS (AB)

ITRES RESEARCH LTD. (AB)

MISSION CRITICAL SYSTEMS (AB)

MOUNTAIN POWER INC. (BC)

NAVIFORM CONSULTING INC. (BC)

PANVION (AB)

SED SYSTEMS (SK)

VX TECHNOLOGIES (AB)



Major prime contractors came to Canada too, looking for potential suppliers to partner with and fulfil their industrial regional benefit obligations. SNC-Lavalin Profac Inc. and ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems AG, the two industry teams qualified to compete for the \$2.9-billion contract to design the fleet of three new Navy support and supply ships, looked to WD for help in the western Canadian leg of their search.

WD assisted the companies by identifying suppliers and by providing logistical support in their tours of the West. Tour stops for SNC-Lavalin covered all of Western Canada, while ThyssenKrupp targeted their visit to B.C.

### **U.S.** Defence scouring Canadian industry offerings

With a military budget of nearly US\$440 billion earmarked for 2007, the United States Department of Defense has almost unimaginable buying power - presenting an incredible economic opportunity for its ally to the north.

Over the summer, the U.S. Department of Defense's Comparative Technology Office (CTO) conducted a Foreign Comparative Testing Tour across Canada, looking to learn about Canadian industry capabilities, and to test and evaluate Canadian technologies. In the West, their tour included a stop in Calgary, where CTO representatives met with 11 companies.

WD played a key role in making the tour a reality, providing logistical support and working with Canada's Department of National Defence to identify companies of interest to the CTO.

One of the companies, Mission Critical Electronic Systems Inc, opened its doors in early 2007 and is already taking off. A small Calgary-based operation, the company specializes in vision enhancement technology and has invented unique binoculars that allow users to see clearly in extreme conditions like sandstorms, fog, heat haze and snow.

"By luck so far, word is getting out that we have a technology that's doing the job better than what's currently out there," said Mission Critical president Sean Randle. "The U.S. comparative testing tour was a great opportunity to spread the word further and get our technology out into U.S. markets. WD was a great help in making that happen."

#### Western aerospace industry taking flight

Canada's aerospace industry is the fourth largest in the world, behind only the United States, Britain and France. With annual revenues upwards of \$3 billion, Western Canada's aerospace industry accounts for 14 per cent of Canada's \$22-billion industry performance.

Many western companies have already made inroads into the defence sector, including Winnipeg's Standard Aero, which has conducted significant business with the U.S. Air Force, and Saskatoon's SED Systems, which count Lockheed Martin and Boeing among their clients.

(Data based on the 2006 KPMG study, Competitive Alternatives)



Mission Critical, a Calgary-based company with fewer than 20 employees, hopes to link its unique vision-enhancement binoculars with lucrative U.S. Department of Defense opportunities. Shown above is a view that has been enhanced using their technology.



# NeuroArm heralds new era in brain surgery

by Loreen Lennon

Like its big brother the Canadarm, the University of Calgary's breakthrough MRI-compatible surgical tool will never replace human touch.

But neuroArm can, and will, certainly strengthen the accuracy and safety of brain and spinal cord surgery just as Canadarm improved the accuracy and safety of space exploration. The neuroArm is a system for robot-assisted

surgical procedures that combines magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology with Canadian robotic expertise perfected in the Canadarm.

A world's first, neuroArm has two manipulators that mimic human hands, enabling surgeons to perform highly intricate surgical procedures on the human brain and spinal cord remotely. This unique technology also has the potential to extend a surgeon's career.

Garnette Sutherland, neuroArm project leader says, "Rather than stand over a patient's head for hours at a time – fighting off tremor and stifling sneezes – neurosurgeons will soon be able to sit in front of a bank of computer screens and manipulate a device that looks like a joystick."

Launched this spring after more than six years in development, the \$27 million robot is the culmination of a partnership between the university, the Calgary Health Region, the Province of Alberta, private donors and businesses, and WD.

WD's \$3 million investment enabled the crucial early planning and design of the project, setting the stage for the remaining support to build this one-of-a-kind machine and create a comprehensive medical robotics program.

The university says neuroArm and iMRI technologies provide a unique platform essential to attracting, training and retaining highly qualified people. With MR enhanced imaging capabilities and the neuroArm precision, there is great potential for technology commercialization. It is expected that further technologies and tools offering improved functionality, accurate diagnostics, less invasive intervention, and enhanced physician performance will be developed in the region.

Complex brain surgeries using the neuroArm will begin this summer at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary. Currently in clinical trials, neuroArm is expected to go to the global market once the prototype is approved by Health Canada.



Dr. Garnette Sutherland, Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Calgary and neuroArm project leader, demonstrating the neuroArm technology.

PHOTO CREDIT: JASON STANG



# New simulator to launch careers of B.C. aerospace students

by Karl Yeh

Students and companies in British Columbia's aerospace industry will have a significant advantage with FIRSTplus, a leading edge Air Traffic Control training tool offered at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT).

The platform, purchased with \$2 million from WD, will give BCIT the capacity to help meet the growing demand for highly skilled workers and advanced air traffic management programs. WD funding will also enable research to extend the FIRSTplus platform to other potential applications, such as homeland security, major event security and disaster preparedness.

BCIT will be the first post-secondary institution in Canada – and one of the few in North America – to offer 3D visual tower simulation technology.

"The addition of the FIRSTplus tower simulator at BCIT will provide students and industry partners with access to one of the most advanced air traffic management simulation tools available today," said Lane Trotter, Dean of BCIT's School of Transportation.

"This sophisticated simulator will give students a sense of real world situations in a tower, terminal radar and enroute environments; situations that will be critical to the new programs being developed at BCIT."

FIRSTplus includes a virtual control tower with an out-of-the-window display, and a virtual radar simulation that

mirrors both enroute and terminal air traffic control environments.

The investment is part of BCIT's new Air Traffic Management and Integrated Security Simulation Laboratory (ATM Lab). The lab will provide benchmark training and accreditation programs, and lead to new commercial applications that enhance pilot training, airport operations and perimeter security.

The ATM Lab will be located in BCIT's new 300,000 square foot Aerospace Technology Campus at Vancouver's International Airport. It will be the showcase laboratory as part of the campus's new Security Transportation and Research Initiative. For more information about the lab, visit www.bcit. ca/transportation/aerospace/.

The aerospace sector is emerging as British Columbia's newest economic driver. Over 30 aerospace firms have taken up residence in the province, including: MacDonald Dettwiler & Associates, Avcorp Industries and Kelowna Flightcraft. All orders of government and various academic institutions have invested a combined \$25 million to help grow the industry. As a result, the aerospace sector is establishing a foothold in the B.C. economy, employing more than 4,000 people and generating over \$650 million annually.

Aerospace IndustriesAssociation of Canada AnnualReport 2006



Raytheon's
FIRSTplus tower
simulator.
PHOTO COURTESY OF

RAYTHEON COMPANY

Present at the BCIT contract signing are, standing left to right,
Lane Trotter, Dean, BCIT School of Transportation; Craig Fulton,
WD, Kandice Johnson, WD; and Lawrence Melen, Raytheon.
Seated (left to right) are Nina Leemhuis, Chief Financial Officer,
BCIT; and Maryann King, Director of Surveillance and Technology,
Airspace Management and Homeland Security, Raytheon.



# University-business partnership putting Lethbridge on the map

by Loreen Lennon

Beyond the obvious success in developing practical applications for his satellite imaging technology, what the president of lunctus Geomatics likes most about his partnership with the University of Lethbridge in the Alberta Terrestrial Imaging Centre (ATIC) is how it's affecting his town.

"ATIC is putting Lethbridge on the map, so to speak, and changing the city's dynamics," says Ryan Johnson, lunctus president. "This is a world-class centre and we're creating new jobs and new

economic benefits, and that makes a positive difference in a city of this size."

Located at the University of Lethbridge, ATIC is a not-for-profit entity that has taken lunctus data and is developing attractive commercial applications that were beyond the scope of Johnson's geomatics business. WD invested over \$2.7 million in the partnership to help it start and grow.

ATIC supplies its primarily academic customer base of more than 70 research institutions across Canada with uniquely high quality data and satellite images. The centre also intends to develop and license intellectual property, as well as provide services and products to private and government organizations.

The centre uses Johnson's unlimited access to state-of-the-art satellite imaging databanks to develop new and improved applications in information technology and data management. Johnson calls them "tools for growth" to solve real-life problems.

He says the centre can use the remote sensing tools and the information they provide to offer governments and business the means to better manage our natural resources, our water and the environment.

"What's new is that in seeking solutions everyone can view the same information at the same time and avoid costly misunderstandings," says Johnson.

Johnson says terrestrial imaging information could play a part in such diverse activities as national security and livestock management. He points to some other examples of important potential applications, including:

- Tracking the movement of the pine beetle infestation to asses risk and issue alerts
- Monitoring water flows between Canada and the United States
- · Tracking climate changes.

As a local boy happy to be making good in his hometown, Johnson emphasizes the importance of his partnerships with academia and, through ATIC, with the Government of Canada in facilitating his success. When he realized lunctus wasn't equipped to take advantage of the potential for innovation, he found the University of Lethbridge ready and able to provide research and expansion capability. With the help of funding partners – WD and the Province of Alberta – ATIC was born.

Since the advent of Google and an increasingly Internet-literate public, Johnson says many more people now understand satellite imagery and what he does, but he is often questioned by his international customers, why Lethbridge?

"I tell them it's because we're building a Centre of Excellence for the new economy in Western Canada and I want to be here to help it happen."

The installation of ATIC's satellite receiving station marked a first in North America for this type of technology. ATIC, a partnership between lunctus Geomatics and the University of Lethbridge, will bring world-class SPOT satellite imaging to Lethbridge for commercial and research use.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JUNCTUS



# Plan moving forward to grow Saskatchewan's bio-sciences cluster



Saskatchewan can become a national and global leader in the life sciences sector by focusing on bio-fuels and bioproducts, nutrition, health and wellness, says a report released by the Conference Board of Canada.

The report, Building Saskatchewan's Bio-Economy: A Life Sciences Strategy, states that roughly 10 per cent of Canada's 530 life sciences companies are based in Saskatchewan, which leaves plenty of room for growth in the sector.

Ag-West Bio Inc. commissioned the strategy with \$23,000 from WD to help build on the province's existing comparative advantage and accelerate the growth of its bio-based industries.

The result was 20 recommendations on how to go about developing the industry with a focus on two key sectors where the province already has infrastructure in place: bio-fuels and bio-products, and nutrition, health and wellness.

"A huge number of products produced today require plastics and composites derived from non-renewable resources

like petroleum," said Ag-West Bio's president and CEO, Dr. Ashley O'Sullivan. "Saskatchewan's access to renewable resources provides a variety of environmentally friendly feedstocks that will ensure the province maintains a strong and sustainable position in the global bio-economy."

Already, Ag-West Bio is moving ahead to put the recommendations into place. Dr. O'Sullivan and the organisation's steering committee are working to establish an industry-led bio-fuels and bio-products centre that will enable world-leading bio-product research and commercialization.

"We are building a business case and moving forward with stakeholders to establish the Centre." he said. "The

challenge will be coordinating all the companies in the industry to work together on a common goal."

For a copy of the report and more information on how Ag-Bio West is working to grow Saskatchewan's bio-economy, visit www. agwest.sk.ca.

THE PRODUCTION OF **BIO-FUELS AND BIO-**PRODUCTS, SUCH AS ETHANOL AND ANIMAL FEED, PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE THE REVENUE FOR PRIMARY PRODUCERS, IMPROVE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL COMMUNITIES, CREATE NEW HIGH-VALUE JOBS AND HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

- BUILDING SASKATCHEWAN'S BIO-ECONOMY: A LIFE SCIENCES STRATEGY



Ethanol is a clean-burning fuel alcohol that can be blended with gasoline to ease demand on fossil fuels. Saskatchewan is home to one of the largest operating wheat-based ethanol plants in the country.



#### Eureka!

by Lee Gregg

Ever have a terrific high-tech idea but discover that your basement or garage is not the ideal place to launch it? Welcome to the eureka project, Smartpark's hightech start-up business incubator.

Located next to the University of Manitoba, Smartpark members are "Building a Community of Innovators." Part of their vision is to support hightech innovation and entrepreneurship in the areas of information and communications technology, engineering and advanced materials, health and biotechnology, agricultural and nutritional sciences, and environmental solutions.

One resident company, SMT Research, Ltd. (www.smt-research.com), performs research and development in civionics - the science of meshing electronics with the design of civil structures. Products include remote-measuring units capable of interfacing with a variety of indoor air quality sensors to monitor CO2 levels,

and a system that detects and locates the first signs of water penetration through a building's envelope (walls, windows, doors, etc.). The moisture detection and monitoring system is being used as a preventative measure in B.C. to deal with the leaky condo situation, which will reach an estimated \$2 billion in water damages - SMT also applies the same monitoring technology to roof systems.

"We are working closely with Manitoba Hydro to install the system on their green roof," said Gamal Mustapha, President of SMT Research. "Buildings with a green roof require a method to detect leaks without having to destroy the garden."

"There are many benefits of being part of the eureka project," added Mustapha. "Its location makes it easier to access resources and take advantage of the synergy created between the university and private industry located at Smartpark. There is also synergy between the companies in the incubator, THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF THE EUREKA PROJECT. ITS LOCATION MAKES IT EASIER TO ACCESS RESOURCES AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SYNERGY CREATED BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY LOCATED AT SMARTPARK.

- GAMAL MUSTAPHA, PRESIDENT OF SMT RESEARCH.

and the director who oversees the eureka project has a lot of experience and contacts to move products from conception to commercialization."

Opened in 2006, the eureka project is currently home to eight high-tech companies involved in research and development of nutraceuticals, airship technology, interactive learning resources and software. The incubator provides expert feedback from the business community, networking events, flexible space options, IT support, intellectual property advice from the university's Technology Transfer Office, and handson assistance with developing business, financing, and marketing plans.

by WD. For information on the eureka project, visit www.eurekaproject.ca.

Smartpark is an initiative supported



Roof installation of SMT's moisture detection and monitoring system.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SMT RESEARCH, LTD.



CONTINUED FROM COVER

# New terminal to attract major cruise lines

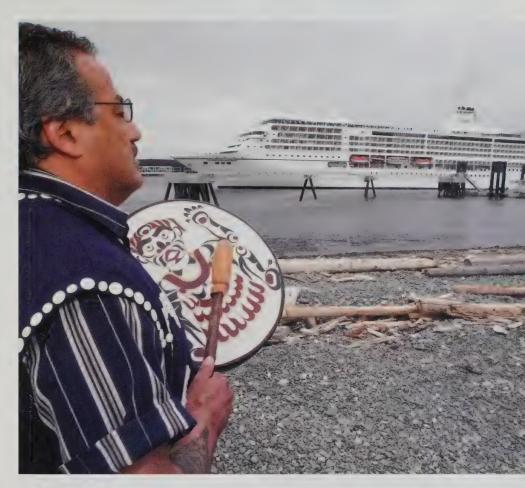
Owned and operated by the Campbell River Indian Band, this \$24.5 million terminal brings long-term economic benefits to Campbell River and the entire regional economy. The Wei Wai Kum terminal is projected to create over 200 jobs and generate \$11.4 million annually.

WD provided \$3.2 million to the terminal. Other financial support came from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Province of British Columbia and the City of Campbell River.

"It's just unbelievable to see this ship dock here. Everybody said it wouldn't happen and it's just so nice to see it happen," said Jodee Dick, economic development officer for the Campbell River Indian Band who worked on establishing the Wei Wai Kum terminal for over five years.

"The Campbell River Indian Band is extremely excited to welcome our first ship and to see our cruise ship vision come to reality," said Chief Robert Pollard. "This is not just a great day for the Campbell River Indian Band but for the City of Campbell River and surrounding communities."

A visit to the Wei Wai Kum terminal promises a distinctly Aboriginal experience. Upon arrival, visitors see a traditional village complete with totem poles and a Big House, providing a window into Laichwiltach history and culture.



Aboriginal drummers and dancers at the Wai Kum terminal offer visitors a uniquely Aboriginal experience.

Visitors disembarking from the ship are met by greeters and dancers and hear the sounds of drums echoing throughout the passage. The marketplace area provides an opportunity to taste traditional foods and make purchases from local artisans and craftspeople. A traditional carving shed gives onlookers a first-hand look at First Nation carvers in action. Visitors who book the Big House shore program can watch dances performed at the Laichwiltach potlatch ceremony, learn the history of the Big House and savour traditional barbequed salmon.

A variety of shore packages also give passengers a chance to get beyond the terminal for First Nation experiences and adventures, arts and culture, fishing, wildlife viewing, sightseeing adventures, golf and educational tours.

The Regent Seven Seas Cruise Line has scheduled four stops at the Wei Wai Kum Terminal on its 2007 Alaska Cruise run. Regent is already making plans to book four more stops in 2008. The Campbell River Indian Band is also in discussions with other major cruise lines to make Wei Wai Kum Terminal a port-of-call for their cruise ships.



### La Vision des visions

by Lee Gregg

Advancing economic development, developing youth entrepreneurial activities and strengthening economic ties between Manitoba's Francophone communities with those of the Bas-Rhin region of France and Belgium will continue with \$2.25 million from WD and the Province of Manitoba through the Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement.

The investment, to be managed by the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Communities (CDEM), will build on the community economic progress plans developed in 2004-2005. Through this exercise, CDEM created an overall plan, la Vision des visions, in which sector specific opportunities in agriculture, health and tourism were identified for strategic development.

"These initiatives are important to help stimulate economic growth in Manitoba's Francophone communities and allow them to flourish," said Denis Tétrault, President of CDEM. "In addition, stronger Francophone communities are a boon to the provincial economy and a clear demonstration of the value-added of bilingualism in our province."

Economic development projects championed by CDEM include the St. Malo Resort, La Broquerie Business Centre, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes industrial park, and the St. Léon Interpretation Centre. As well, CDEM continues to build on the CDEM-sponsored missions Manitoba companies made to Europe by organizing visits for French and Belgian business owners interested in investment opportunities in Manitoba.

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– Denis Tétrault,
President of the Economic
Development Council
for Manitoba Bilingual
Communities (CDEM).

The summer of 2007 saw CDEM once again coordinating a Youth Entrepreneurship Camp, where youth learned how to organize and run their own small business with help from the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan. Youth integration is essential to the economic development of bilingual municipalities and CDEM's goal is to create awareness about the potential of entrepreneurship and the benefits of being one's own boss.

Today, CDEM works with 16 rural communities to build capacity within the Community Development Corporations; undertake feasibility studies, market research and business planning; and provide a variety of services to support start-up projects.

Francophone youth enjoy Camp Jeune
Entrepreneur, creating their own silk-screen
lingerie and selling them at the Saskatoon
Fringe Festival.
PHOTO COURTESY OF CDEM





### Recycling centre expands

by Colleen Gnyp

Saskatoon's Cosmopolitan Industries Ltd. recycles over 75 per cent of newspapers dropped in the 230 bins on the city's 90 depot sites. Executive Director Peter Gerrard says that the norm for newspaper recycling is about 60 per cent.

With a staff of 120, Cosmo employs and provides programming for over 400 adults with intellectual disabilities.

WD provided \$475,000 through its Saskatoon Urban Development Agreement to expand Cosmos's paper recycling facilities. The additional 10,000 square feet of floor space will increase efficiency, recycling capacity and, with less congestion, improve employee safety.

Gerrard says they will move from having one paper sort line to two.

"We will be able to accommodate

more staff and program participants as each belt will have variable speeds that can be adjusted to the expertise on the line," he says. "This will allow our program participants to be fully engaged in the sorting process."

In the recycling industry, a good quality sort improves sales.

"Cardboard is a worldwide commodity," Gerrard says. "With the expansion, we hope to recycle more cardboard and increase revenue."



Staff and participants of Cosmo's special program for people with disabilities applaud news of the expansion of the recycling plant.

# The Green technology behind Calgary power

by Loreen Lennon

In a province known for its oil-fuelled economy, Calgary is combining green technology with natural resources to fuel its own downtown core.

With a typically western pioneering spirit and \$20 million in federal-provincial funding under the Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, the City is installing a "green"

heat and power energy system in its city centre.

In the current Phase I of the Calgary
Downtown District Energy System, heat
generated by natural gas-fired engines
will be distributed to buildings in the
downtown core and then used again to
drive generators to provide electricity.
This value-added efficiency is expected
to result in significant greenhouse gas
reductions.

A combined heat and power cogeneration energy plant will be located further from the city centre in a proposed Phase II that is expected to be complete by 2010.

Technology of this kind is not yet in widespread use in this country, making Calgary a western Canadian leader in its development, says Calgary mayor, Dave Bronconnier.

When complete, in addition to generating electricity, the district energy system will also provide space heating and cooling services through underground piping to existing buildings and new developments.

"It's a very positive leap forward for the environment, and demonstrates what can be done when there is commitment to a green future by federal, provincial and municipal governments," says Bronconnier.



## Infrastructure – Building a stronger West

by Loreen Lennon

Communities across the West are building better roads, bridges, water treatment plants and recreational facilities with the help of the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund – MRIF for short. This national cost-sharing program is meeting the need for modern and greener infrastructure in a growing economy.

Delivered federally by WD in the West, MRIF is creating a winning environment for growth, competitiveness and economic diversification. Projects funded under MRIF are cost-shared among federal, provincial and local governments to support priorities such as water and wastewater treatment as well as community centres.

"Canada's New Government made a fundamental commitment to long-

term and predictable funding for infrastructure through the Building Canada initiative," says Rona Ambrose, Minister of Western Economic Diversification. "By investing in our local community infrastructure – roads, recreation facilities, clean air and water – we ensure our communities continue to attract investment, and remain great places to live, work and play."

Over its five-year lifespan, MRIF will see over \$686 million invested in rural and urban community infrastructure across the West. Since 2005, more than \$148.6 million in federal-provincial funding has been announced for 178 MRIF projects, ranging from green infrastructure such as sewage and water treatment plants, to road and bridge construction, to the renewal or expansion of recreation facilities

A primary focus of the program is green infrastructure. Eco-friendly developments such as Calgary's innovative Downtown District Energy Project; the Dauphin Arena Eco-Chill Ice System, and the new, regular low-fare transit for residents of the Municipal District of Big Lakes are a few of the projects that are helping decrease energy needs and air pollution. Many smaller communities are benefiting from improved drinking water and environmentally safer wastewater systems as well as environmentally friendly recreation facilities that will last for generations to come.

It all adds up to a better quality of life for western Canadians.

For more information on federal infrastructure programs in the West, visit www.wd.gc.ca/ced/infrastructure.



# SaskTel Sports Centre upgrades

In September 2006, the Canada-Saskatchewan MRIF announced \$300,000 to complete Phase 3 of the SaskTel Sports Centre in northeast Saskatoon. Phase 3 includes constructing the outdoor Path of Champions walkway, donor recognition wall, an elevated press box for coaches, officials and media, and aluminium bleachers. The \$15-million sports centre's four soccer fields make it one of the largest indoor soccer parks in Canada. It also houses two hard surface fields that host a variety of other activities, including volleyball, lacrosse, baseball and gymnastics.

An aerial view of the newly renovated SaskTel Sports Centre





(l to r) Myler Savill, Reeve of the MD of Big Lakes; John Brodrick, Mayor of the Town of High Prairie; Melissa Blake, Mayor of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo; Pearl Calahasen, MLA for Lesser Slave Lake; Brian Jean, MP for Fort McMurray—Athabasca at a \$4.8 million Canada-Alberta MRIF announcement that included \$3.3 million for an Urban Road Rehabilitation Program for Wood Buffalo.

# Fort McMurray road repairs

The oil boom in Northern Alberta has been a bust for the transportation infrastructure in the Fort McMurray region. Much-needed repairs will be made this year as a result of a \$3.3 million Canada-Alberta MRIF investment. Kicking off a 10-year rehabilitation program to upgrade and extend the life of the existing paved network, the repairs will reduce congestion, improve safety, and even benefit the public transit system directly with fuel savings and lower operating costs as a result of the smoother roads.

# System improvements mean safer water supply in Turner Valley

Residents of Turner Valley will have access to better drinking water with the help of a \$1.7 million federal-provincial MRIF investment. This green project will construct a new sanitary main, a river crossing and two lift stations that will serve the Southwest portion of the town and eliminate septic fields beside the Sheep River water wells – the town's source of drinking water. The new sanitary main will divert wastewater to the municipal sewage treatment plant and reduce the risk of toxins entering the water system. The project will also protect the Sheep River and the area's ecosystem from contamination.

Over its lifespan, MRIF will see over \$686 million invested in infrastructure across the West.



# New Millennium Recreation Complex for Pilot Mound

The community of Pilot Mound is so passionate about building a new recreation complex, they traveled 800 kilometres to Sundance, Manitoba, to disassemble and move an existing structure back to their town.

Constructed with the help of \$855,000 through the Canada-Manitoba MRIF, the facility will house an ice arena, three-sheet curling rink, cultural centre and fitness centre once complete. Pilot Mound's innovative approach reduced their project costs by approximately \$1 million.



# Small Business Week 2007

### A world without boundaries, open to new markets

October 14 to 20 is Small Business Week, an annual celebration organized by the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) to pay tribute to Canadian entrepreneurs.

As the source of nearly half of all jobs in the region, small- and medium-sized businesses play a vital role in the West. That's why we make it one of our top priorities to encourage entrepreneurship as part of a competitive and expanded business sector.

To grow and succeed in today's global economy, entrepreneurs need access to capital, business information and advice. WD provides these and other services through its partners in the Western Canada Business Service Network, which offers over 100 points of service across the West. For more on the many services available through the Network, visit www.canadabusiness.ca.

WD is proud to join the celebration as a partner with the BDC and as a long-time supporter of entrepreneurship in the region. ■



## Access to risk capital

by Halona Padiachy

Obtaining financing for a new venture can be a harrowing experience for startup companies and small business owners.

That's why WD teamed up with financial institutions across the West to offer financing solutions through its micro loan programs. The programs improve access to financing available to higher risk small and start-up businesses in the Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg areas that do not qualify for regular business loans.

In 1997, WD signed the first micro loan agreement with Vancity. Since that time, the program has grown to include Coast Capital Savings, Servus, FirstSask, and Assiniboine. Over the last 10 years, 2,155 businesses across the West have received a total of \$28.8 million in financing.

Loans of up to \$35,000 are available for a variety of projects, including

OVER THE NEXT FOUR
YEARS, \$14.3 MILLION IN
LOANS WILL BE AVAILABLE
THROUGH THE FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS TO SMALL
AND START-UP ENTERPRISES,
LEVERAGED WITH UP TO
\$2.6 MILLION FROM WD.

research and development, marketing, market development, pre-commercial and commercial product or service improvement, or as working capital.

If you're looking to start or expand an existing business, visit www. wd.gc.ca/finance/xnetwork\_e.asp for more information on WD's loan and investment programs.

# Loans feed growing appetite for Urban Carnivore

by Cameron Zimmer

With a passion for animals and over a decade of experience breeding German Shepherds, progression into the raw pet food market seemed a natural next step for Saskatoon-based entrepreneurs Brenda and Dennis Hagel.

They started the Urban Carnivore, which specializes in frozen raw pet food made from naturally raised, hormone- and antibiotic-free livestock, in 2003.

With the help of several loans under the FirstSask Credit Union Micro Loan program, the Hagels started their business and made it grow. "We were a perfect dovetail for the program requirements," says Dennis.

The micro loans have helped the Hagels meet a range of business needs, from purchasing a new freezer compressor to building a new 5,000-square-foot facility in Saskatoon's north industrial area.

Today, Urban Carnivore employs several people and supplies hundreds of retailers nationally. The Hagels have diversified their business interests as well; their latest micro loan was used to develop a unique equestrian facility south of Saskatoon, which offers boarding, pastures, stabling and riding arenas.



### Micro loan has major impact on Part Time Ninja

by Tom Wakefield

When the time came to start her own business, Ronnie Lee Hill drew on her digital arts background and vision for a funky line of ninja-themed children's clothing.

Despite her unique business concept, traditional lenders wouldn't take the risk of helping her business start up. With few options, she turned to her local Vancity credit union, and a WD micro loan program.

Today her business, Part Time Ninja, is Vancouver's coolest children's clothing line. With creations now sold in seven Lower Mainland locations, Hill is turning her sites to Alberta and beyond.

"When I started Part Time Ninja, I knew I had something that would not only work, but rise above and beyond Vancouver's current options in kids clothing. The micro loan helped me to bring that vision into reality and to continue to thrive through all of the growing pains."



Lili Ouellet models her Part Time Ninja T-shirt, created by Ronnie Lee Hill. Hill started her company with a micro loan create a unique clothing line.



Tiber River Naturals' bright and airy showroom displays soaps, lotions, shampoos, bath products, aromatherapy oils, facial products, room sprays, and baby and men's products. PHOTO COURTESY OF TIBER RIVER NATURALS

### **Tiber River Naturals off** and running with help from loan fund

by Lee Gregg

In 2001, Tiber River Naturals received \$10,000 through the Assiniboine Credit Union and a WD micro loan program, giving the home-based business the support it needed to open its Academy Road location.

"The loan let us get off the ground and open our first shop," said co-owner Michelle Lalonde. "The staff at Assiniboine Credit Union do a lot more than that; they treat us like we're important to them. It's been a great relationship."

Lalonde handles marketing and sales while partner Adrianna De Luca creates and formulates the all-natural personal care products displayed throughout the store. In just one year, sales increased fourfold and Tiber River now has a keen following.

"One of our niche markets is young girls," noted De Luca. "We offer birthday parties and as a result we have girls bringing their mothers into the shop. They're a unique customer and we're creating a relationship for life."

# Minister's awards recognize local innovations and volunteers

Each year, the Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation recognizes a Community Futures office in each western province for outstanding achievement in creating local solutions to local challenges.

First awarded in 2000, the award recognizes and showcases best practices in community economic development. Eligible initiatives diversify the local economy, have a measurable and lasting impact, show leadership and creativity, and serve as a model for other Community Futures offices.

The success of the Community
Futures (CF) program depends on
the community volunteers who set
the direction of their own local CF
organizations, developing creative
solutions to local challenges. WD's
Minister's Award for Excellence in
Community Futures Volunteerism is
also presented annually to celebrate
the outstanding contribution of
an individual in furthering the CF
program. ■

#### Small berry packs big promise

by Lee Gregg

Strategic planning, project development, financial support – all this and more has made Community Futures East Interlake the winner of the 2006 WD Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation for its support of the Stonewall & District Innovative Crops Committee (SADICC).

SADICC was established to develop a strategy to introduce new crops that would increase profit per acre, diversify agricultural processing in the East Interlake region and create new business opportunities for local producers. Now in its seventh year, SADICC has completed an innovative crops opportunity study and after analysing 125 crops and plants identified the saskatoon berry as the number one value-added crop opportunity.

SADICC decided the best way to complete the next phase of the project, including feasibility studies and business

plans, would be to establish a new organization dedicated to this venture. Eastern Plains Saskatoons Inc. (EPSI) was created to develop and promote a sustainable and profitable saskatoon berry industry.

In less than one year, EPSI created a saskatoon berry research orchard, obtained a mechanical harvester and plastic mulch applicator, organized a field day, created a website with saskatoon berry resources, and coordinated a bulk order of root stock and mulch for its 30 members. EPSI is well positioned to market saskatoons domestically and internationally, a venture that will lead to local processing, product development, employment growth and net wealth for the region.

To date, SADICC has leveraged over \$275,000 in funding for this initiative and is now busy at work exploring new agricultural opportunities for the East Interlake region. ■







Pat Roy receives the 2006 Minister's Award for Excellence for Community Futures Volunteerism from Ron Sellen, WD Manager of Service Delivery Partnerships

# The power of individuals to effect remarkable change

. \_E (1 'Q'

It has been said that the spirit of volunteerism is one of generosity and an expression of support for a principle. So it came as no surprise that Community Futures Parkland's Pat Roy was the winner of the 2006 Minister's Award for Excellence for Community Futures Volunteerism in Manitoba.

"Pat is committed to the vision of Community Futures because its foundation is the grassroots of the nation," said Ben Kardoes, Co-Chair of CF Parkland. "With such a fundamental foundation, the sky is the limit and her actions over the years have supported this vision on numerous occasions."

Lindsay Rubeniuk, Parkland Community Development Coordinator added, "Pat believes that the CF program can overcome the impossible and create programs at a grassroots level that will assist in sustainable rural development."

# Ministerial Award of Excellence goes to two-time winner

by Tom Wakefield

The Community Futures (CF) of Pacific Northwest is the first two-time winner of WD's Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation.

This year, the CF of Pacific Northwest won the award for delivering the "Change Brings Opportunities" conference. The conference brought together more than 350 delegates from across North America to explore the economic opportunities of converting the Prince Rupert Port into a container terminal.

In 2005, the CF won the award for its

Resources, Access and Information Network project, which brought computers and Internet access to nine communities within the Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District.

"We appreciate winning the award, but must give credit to the communities who come together to support our projects," said Maynard Angus, then General Manager of Community Futures Pacific Northwest and lead for the project. "As communities in B.C.'s northwest region face economic challenges moving from a resource-based economy, we will continue to try to meet and support their needs."



Nicknamed the Iron Woman by Community Futures Partners of Manitoba's board of directors, Pat has been an active volunteer with the Community Futures program for 20 years. In addition to the countless hours that Pat has committed to the CF program, she is an active volunteer in her community and has spent almost 700 hours in the Ukraine, fostering business and community development.

# RETROSPECTIVE

Jooy marks W.D.: twentieth year of hadding a stronges more proporate West. This milestone made us think back to our easy moustments and this i impact on the economy – and the prophe – of the West. Elem's one investment from over 10 years ago that has turned Moore Jaw. Saskarchewar Into a thriving towns distances.

# Mineral spa generates millions for once-struggling community

#### the College Grey

Moose Jaw is home to a multi-million-dollar luxury spa because a community in trouble pulled together to build a dream.

A project that started over 10 years ago with a handful of volunteer founding-directors each putting \$25 dollars into the proverbial hat, Temple Gardens Mineral Spa Resort is now a world-class destination frequented by thousands of spa enthusiasts and generating millions in revenue annually.

Deb Thorn, founding president and current Chief Operating Officer and General Manager, says it was a journey for the community. Driven by determination and inspired by knowledge of geothermal waters deep below the city's surface, residents worked together and with three orders of government — including \$1.1 million from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) — to bring their dream to life.

"At the time the Spa was proposed Moose Jaw's economy was suffering,"

says Thorn. "Worse, our young people were leaving because there were no jobs. Without these partnerships, community support and assistance from government, particularly WD, Temple Gardens would not exist today."

In June 1996, the \$7-million spa opened its doors for business with 53 employees, a mineral spa, restaurant and 69 hotel rooms. By 2002, it had expanded to



of over \$11 million, with future plans to expand in the works. It has been named one of Canada's top spas three times.

Building the Spa spurred an economic rejuvenation in the city, with developments including the Murals of Moose Jaw, the Tunnels of Little Chicago, and Moose Jaw's Visitor Information Centre – all of which received WD support to help the community adjust and diversify following reductions at a local Canadian Forces base.

"What has been most rewarding for me is the change in the community's attitude, from negative to positive," says Thorne. "It is now with much pride that we call Moose Jaw 'home'."

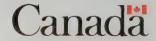
For more information on the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa, visit www. templegardens.sk.ca.

Moose Jaw's Temple Gardens Mineral Spa started as a community dream and is now a world-class destination that generates millions annually.

#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement no. 40063159

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## Access West



#### B.C. Port opens to global opportunities

by Jillian Glover

When the Prince Rupert Port Authority celebrated the opening of its Fairview Terminal, Western Canada and the community of Prince Rupert opened up to a world of new opportunities.

The Fairview Terminal at Prince Rupert's Port is being hailed as the biggest thing

to hit northwest B.C. since the Grand Trunk Pacific railway first reached the West Coast. Trumpeted as an "express trade corridor," the new terminal shaves more than two days from shipping times between Asia and North America.

This increased capacity will strengthen

Canada's position as a fast, efficient, secure and reliable Gateway – one that satisfies the demands of Asian shippers who are looking to build commercial bridges to North America.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



#### **Access West**

#### Winter 2008

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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#### Disponible aussi en français

ISSN 1495-6802 (Print) ISSN 1495-6543 (Online)



#### A stronger West

#### Message from the Honourable Rona Ambrose

Natural resources laid the economic foundation of the West and continue to be a mainstay today. However, as fluctuating world markets and natural challenges like the mountain pine beetle infestation occur, creating a strong, diverse economy becomes more important than ever.

Ports strengthen the western economy, helping our businesses and commodities compete internationally. Creating global business opportunities and markets leads to jobs.

That's why WD is partnering in the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative, as well as supporting key port infrastructure improvements and marketing projects – activities that ensure that the region is a strong link in the nation's network of trade and transportation infrastructure.

In line with the national science and technology strategy, *Mobilizing Science & Technology to Canada's Advantage*, we're also keeping the economy strong by investing in cutting-edge industries, such

as nanotechnology, biotechnology and environmental technologies.

With small business growth in the West continuing to outpace that of the rest of the country, the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well. WD continues to support this valuable source of prosperity by investing in programs that encourage trade and investment, and through its Western Canada Business Service Network.

Last year, one of WD's network members, the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan, celebrated 60 years of francophone economic development – a proud history that I am pleased to acknowledge.

Without question, a thriving economy is essential to maintaining our nation's competitiveness and long-term prosperity. My department is actively contributing to a stronger West in a stronger Canada.

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P. President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada,

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification

### Editor's Note

Concern for our environment is reshaping the western economy by driving the development of green technology and clean industrial practices. It's also affecting how we communicate with you.

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#### New centre fast-tracks medical research

By Karl Yeh

The new Centre for Drug Research and Development (CDRD), based at the University of British Columbia, is helping to bring early stage medical research to the marketplace. The Centre provides research and development infrastructure to help health scientists collaborate. refine their discoveries and advance them to commercial use.

British Columbia is home to a wealth of world-leading medical research. In 2003, it was researchers at B.C.'s Genome Sciences Centre, led by Dr. Marco Marra, who were first in the world to crack the genetic code of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) coronavirus, a major breakthrough necessary for the development of reliable diagnostic tests and, eventually, treatments for the deadly

To ensure discoveries such as this bring significant social, economic and health benefits to the public, pure research

"THE CENTRE REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN THE EVOLUTION OF B.C.'s LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY. WE WANT TO BRIDGE THE COMMERCIALIZATION GAP BETWEEN PROMISING MEDICAL DISCOVERIES AND COMMERCIALIZATION. THE CENTRE WILL ENABLE US TO ATTRACT AND KEEP INVESTORS FOR OUR SPIN-OFFS."

- NATALIE DAKERS, CEO, CDRD



Minister Rona Ambrose watches cancer researcher Sandi Dunn at the Centre for Drug Research and Development in Vancouver.

needs to be turned into tangible products and services. With WD funding, the CDRD is establishing laboratories and acquiring new equipment that enable it development of new medicine." to do just that.

Tackling the "commercialization gap

Due to a lack of expertise and resources in early stage development, many research ideas are not able to progress to clinical trials or gain the financial backing to move forward.

The CDRD offers a unique hybrid model made up of two separate bodies that, together, enable drug research and commercialization. Its academic research arm, the Drug Research Institute, enables B.C. researchers to focus and amplify their drug discovery and development efforts. Meanwhile, DDI Drug Development Inc., a private company, facilitates the commercialization of drug therapies by providing capital and expertise to develop products for license or sale to industry.

The Centre is a collaborative operation that enables academia, government and the private sector to capitalize on

therapeutic drug research conducted at B.C. universities. The facility also trains highly qualified researchers in specialized fields to coordinate drug development research and commercialization efforts, creating a virtual network to support researchers across the province.

"The Centre for Drug Research and Development is establishing multiple state-of-the-art labs that will serve researchers and trainees across B.C.." said Natalie Dakers, Chief Executive Officer for the CDRD. "This facility reinforces Canada's commitment to bridging the commercialization gap between research and the successful

For more information on the Centre for Drug Research and Development, visit: www.cdrd.ca



CDRD CEO Natalie Dakers has been a part of the biotech industry, on both the business and academic fronts, for nearly two decades. She helped found the CDRD in 2005 to find ways to increase investment in drug development.



# Plant company incubator grows Prairie Carnation potential

by Heather Waldern Hinds

How does a six-person research team accomplish the work of 30 in just 1,100 square feet? By establishing a laboratory at the National Research Council Plant Biotechnology Institute's (PBI) Industry Partnership Facility (IPF) in Saskatoon.

Calgary-based Saponin Inc. is developing the Prairie Carnation – or Saponaria vaccaria, from the soapwort, or pink family – as a new industrial and personal-care crop for western Canadian agricultural producers by using the expertise and equipment at the IPF.

"We have a company that has about to employees which can function like a 30-person company," says Paul Arnison, Saponin President and Chief Science Officer. "The NRC is enabling a very small company to do sophisticated research and product development that it couldn't do alone or afford alone."

The company wants to produce and process the Prairie Carnation's fine-grained starch for the cosmetic industry and sell its soap-like biochemicals,

called saponins, for industrial, and in the future, medical use.

Working with NRC's saponin expert, Dr. John Balsevich, and using the facility's highly-specialized equipment, Saponin isolated the plant's biochemicals and developed a proprietary seed fractionation process to solve the challenging problem of recovering the plant kingdom's smallest-grained starch.

"We also benefit at the wider level from the access to people at the University [of Saskatchewan] because of their past and current association with NRC," explains Arnison. "There is nowhere equivalent to PBI in terms of what they can provide and what can be done here."

The IPF is the only incubator in North America dedicated to plant biotechnology companies. WD provided \$3.2 million in capital funding for the facility, which focuses on incubating technology and research, and promoting the emergence of new businesses. Companies have access to expertise such as DNA sequencing as well as equipment worth many millions of dollars.

NRC Plant Biotechnology Institute's Head of Business Development, Royal Hinther says the IPF provides the "horsepower," traction and credibility that the early stage companies need to be taken seriously. "They have a much easier time attracting investments and multinationals. Three of the companies in the incubator have partnerships with multinationals."

Ultimately, Saponin wants to set up a processing facility in Saskatchewan or Alberta. If it succeeds and the crop receives regulatory approval, agricultural producers, the agricultural processing sector and, more indirectly, Saskatchewan's drug-manufacturing sector – which is virtually unknown – will all benefit.



Prairie Carnations (shown above) contain biochemicals, or saponins, that have potential applications in the industrial and medical fields.



## Students and industry benefit from chemistry Centre of Excellence

by Lee Gregg

Dr. Michael Freund, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Manitoba '(UofM), arrived from the California Institute of Technology's Beckman Institute in 2002, ready to prepare students for careers in pharmacy, microbiology and disease diagnosis. What he wasn't prepared for was the teaching lab.

"Pieces of equipment were over 50 years old," explained Dr. Freund. "There was no modern equipment or equipment representative of what students would be expected to use in industry."

Taking a proactive approach, Dr. Freund teamed up with colleagues Dr. Feiyue Wang and Dr. Hélèn Perreault and spent two years developing proposals to secure funding for new equipment.

With support from heavy hitters like Cangene, the National Microbiology Lab, the Institute for Biodiagnostics and Standard Aero, the team approached WD to assist with the funding necessary to bring the chemistry lab into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

WD provided \$555,000 to develop the Manitoba Chemical Analysis Laboratory. Partnering with laboratory equipment manufacturer Varian, the UofM negotiated a large price reduction for equipment, extended warranties, on-site training, and 40 per cent discounts for consumables such as lamps and test tubes.

With 40 to 45 per cent of chemistry professionals in Manitoba's life sciences clusters nearing retirement age,



Dr. Michael Freund explains how the inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectrometer (ICPOES) is used to identify and quantify the elements of a substance. The instrument is important in a wide range of areas, from environmental monitoring to identifying ores in mining to characterizing the makeup of oil seed crops.

Dr. Freund sees the UofM as a key player in training students to ensure growth in Manitoba's knowledge-based economy. The chemistry facility plans to double the number of graduates within two years to help meet the increasing needs of industry.

"We can teach the theory, but industry hires chemistry and biochemistry graduates expecting them to be educated on modern equipment," said Dr. Freund. "If students are being trained on old technology, they are not competitive when they enter the workforce."

An advisory board and a management board, which include representatives from the UofM departments of Chemistry, Environment and Geography, as well as representatives from industry and government, oversee the new facility. The management board guides the operation of the facility and ensures it is responsive to the needs of industry in sectors ranging from the life sciences to manufacturing and energy.

For information on the UofM's Department of Chemistry, visit http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/science/chemistry.

#### Tiny technology packs massive potential

In keeping with Canada's new national science and technology strategy, WD's \$3.8 million investment in the Innovation Centre at the National Institute of Nanotechnology (NINT) ensures this world-class Centre will maintain its role as a leader in the burgeoning global nanotechnology

market – expected to be worth \$1.5 trillion by 2015.

NINT, located on the University of Alberta campus, is an example of WD's strategic support of precommercialization activities to develop knowledge-based R&D and promote business clusters outside the traditional.

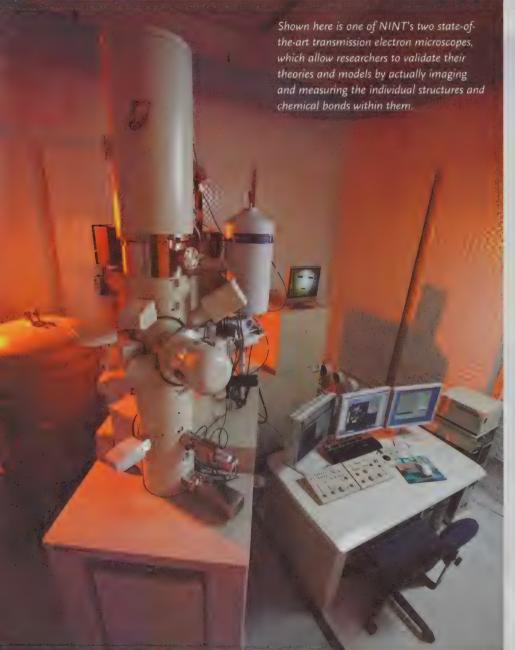
resource-based sectors in Western Canada.

"The Government of Canada recognizes the tremendous potential of nanotechnology to diversify the economy, create new jobs and improve Western Canada's standard of living," said Rahim Jaffer, MP for Edmonton—Strathcona, at the opening of the Innovation Centre last fall.

"Nanotechnology is set to transform the way we live. This is a flagship facility that positions Alberta's nanotech industries for success in the global marketplace by providing a competitive advantage in commercializing new technologies and products," said Mr. Jaffer.

These big possibilities are a product of the smallest possible research. Nanotechnology broadly refers to the field of applied science and technology concerning matter on the atomic and molecular scale, normally 1 to 100 nanometers, and the use of devices within that size range. To put the scale into perspective, a nanometer is one billionth of a metre. Highly multidisciplinary, nanotechnology draws from such fields as applied physics, materials science, device physics, supramolecular chemistry, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, and electrical engineering.

NINT's 20,000 square-metre building is one of the world's most technologically advanced research facilities, housing the quietest laboratory space in Canada, which is critical for nanotech operations. Its objective is to help Canadian companies exploit the as-yet unlimited potential of nanotechnology and to foster an Edmonton-area cluster of companies that make use of this cutting-edge technology.





The Innovation Centre occupies the fourth floor of the NINT building on the University of Alberta campus. It consists of 15 rental units of combined office and laboratory space for startup and existing companies as well as industrial collaborators that all benefit from the close proximity to the high concentration of nanotechnology expertise at NINT and across the university campus.

#### **Mobilizing Science & Technology**

This cutting-edge collaboration and others like it are at the heart of the new national science and technology strategy, Mobilizing Science & Technology to Canada's Advantage.

At the announcement of the strategy last spring, Prime Minister Stephen Harper emphasized a renewed commitment to strengthening Canada's economy by "tapping into and marrying entrepreneurial energy to scientific and technological expertise," making it easier for businesses to create and commercialize new products and services.

WD continues to support strategic partnerships like NINT that can give western Canadian technology businesses a competitive edge. NINT is a partnership between the National Research Council and the University of Alberta, and is jointly funded by the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta and the university.

Partnerships like this, among government, academia and business, are instrumental in supporting the exploration of the frontiers of science and, in this case, commercializing nanotechnology for the benefit of the world.

#### **ASTech Awards honour** Alberta's tech visionaries

In October 2007, Extreme Engineering, a Calgary-based company that has become an acknowledged world leader in acoustic telemetry technology, received the Award for Outstanding Commercial Achievement in Alberta Science and Technology. The award, which targets corporations having gross sales less than \$25 million per year, is sponsored by WD, and is one of a dozen awards presented during the annual Alberta Science & Technology (ASTech) Foundation Awards Gala.

Project neuroArm, a WD-funded initiative, won the ASTech Award for Outstanding Leadership in Alberta Technology.

"This award greatly increases the potential for successful commercialization and global impact," said Dr. Garnette Sutherland, Project neuroArm lead and University of Calgary professor of neurosurgery. Recognized for his cutting-edge work, Dr. Sutherland also formally acknowledged WD's investment as being an important catalyst in Project neuroArm's success.

During the event's opening address, WD Minister Rona Ambrose said Alberta innovators play a vital role in contributing to Canada's economic prosperity and quality of life.

"Canada has a proud history of scientific and technological excellence. Partnerships enable us to assist visionaries, such as tonight's honourees, to transform their dreams into reality," she said. "Tonight, we see evidence that our future will be even brighter."

Each year, the ASTech Awards recognize the best and brightest talents in science and technology. Winners are selected from nominations made by an independent panel of judges composed of professionals from the advanced technology, research and business communities.



Alberta Science Fair winner, Emily Cooley, receives award from Doug Horner, Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology; Minister Ambrose; Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta; Larry Stone, President of the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta; and John McLeod, President of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta at the ASTech Awards Gala.



#### New green facilities showcase **B.C.** focus on sustainability

by Tom Wakefield and Karl Yeh

In recent years, Canadians have experienced record-breaking hot summers and powerful storms. Growing awareness of climate change and how it is affecting everyday lives is driving more Canadians and people worldwide to seek alternative solutions to reduce energy consumption and their ecological footprint.

The world is looking to technological advances to address the challenges ahead, and Western Canada is leading the way with the development and incorporation of environmental technologies, particularly sustainable building technologies such as solar water tubes, green roofs and low-flow faucets.

In British Columbia, two new facilities are being created to help drive adoption of sustainable technologies and to bring these advances to new markets.

#### **New Centre** for Interactive Research a living lab for green technology

With the help of WD funding, a state-ofthe-art Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) will enable researchers to pioneer new forms of urban building technologies and move them to the global marketplace.

"The Centre will be the most innovative, high-performance green building in

North America," said UBC professor John Robinson, Director of the CIRS program. "This living laboratory will showcase leading-edge research and sustainable design, products, systems and decision-making."

Slated to open in 2009, the Centre will be an environmentally friendly facility that demonstrates the latest in sustainable building practices and alternative energy, such as extensive day lighting to reduce electricity use and solar energy for power. More than a research facility, the Centre will also reach out to the community and help people learn about sustainability and how it applies to their daily lives.

CIRS is a unique partnership between the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the British Columbia Institute of Technology and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Expanding partnerships will be a primary focus for CIRS, in particular establishing new links among researchers, practitioners and consumers. These partnerships will identify and nurture emerging western Canadian building technologies, helping them springboard into the marketplace.

For more information about the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability, visit: www.cirs.ubc.ca.



Architectural rendering of the CIRS building at the Great Northern Way Campus, Vancouver.



#### **Energy House** shows Canadians how to reduce ecological footprint

Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek, B.C., wants to show Canadians how they can reduce their impact on the environment. With \$150,000 from WD, they've developed an Energy House, the first of its kind in the province.

Scheduled to open in early 2008, Energy House is part demonstration project and part training facility that will display to Canadians everyday household alternative energy solutions.

Powered by a combination of solar panels and wind turbines, Energy House will showcase cutting-edge technology based on four types of renewable energy: solar electricity and heat as well as geothermal and wind power.

At the same time, future alternative energy maintenance workers and installers will get their career start within the 3,500 square foot facility. Energy House will serve as a training centre for students in the trades and students taking university-transfer science courses, as well as tradespeople looking to enhance their skill sets.

"Northern Lights College is playing a key role informing Canadians young and old about the benefits of renewable energy," said Howard Mayer, Dean of the Business, Industry and Contract Training Division at NLC. "We're hoping Energy House can educate and inspire people to make lasting changes that will benefit the environment."

For more information about Energy House, visit www.nlc.bc.ca.

#### Capitalizing on climate change solutions

Accelerating the adoption of new, environment-friendly technologies goes to the core of WD's objective to create a stronger, more diversified West and a better Canada.

A new three-year initiative in Calgary led by Climate Change Central (C3) EnviroTech Solutions will be a catalyst in bringing environmental industry participants together to leverage existing and new funding sources, and give a boost to the entrepreneurs and small firms who want to commercialize and market new environmental technologies.

On behalf of Minister Ambrose, Calgary-Centre MP Lee Richardson recently announced \$2 million from WD towards a \$6-million C3 project, noting that it is through ventures like C3's new Technology Solutions Hub that WD is helping to expand the western economy beyond its traditional dependence on natural resources.

"We are creating new ways to improve our environment while triggering economic growth in the region," he said.

Climate Change Central is a publicprivate-partnership mandated to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening Alberta's economy and long-term competitiveness. Simon Knight, CEO of C3 EnviroTech Solutions,

"WE ARE CREATING NEW WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR **ENVIRONMENT WHILE** TRIGGERING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE REGION."



Lee Richardson, MP, Calgary Centre and Simon Knight, CEO, C3 EnviroTech Solutions, at the Calgary launch of C3's Technology Solutions Hub.

says that by providing the critical technology evaluation that can accelerate product development, the Technology Solutions Hub is a key element in commercializing green building and renewable energy technology.

"Through this project, we will help businesses access capital in the pilot and demonstration phases of product development," says Knight. "We will also help them access local, national and international markets that address Canada's environmental challenges, including those associated with Alberta's energy sector."

WD's investment supports the Government of Canada's commitment to invest in research, development and technology commercialization; support small- and medium-sized enterprises; and promote a diversified and expanded business sector.

For more information on C3 EnviroTech Solutions, visit: www.tech-hub.ca

CONTINUED FROM COVER

#### Port opening marks new era

by Jillian Glover

A new era in B.C. shipping arrived with the grand opening of the container terminal last September. The historic event garnered international headlines and drew an audience of thousands — including senior government dignitaries, business leaders and First Nations Chiefs from around the world.

"The Prince Rupert Port expansion will change the economic landscape of this region and our nation as we build stronger trade connections between Canada and Asia," said WD Minister Rona Ambrose.

The \$170 million terminal project has been funded by five partners: \$30 million from the Government of Canada through WD; \$60 million from Maher Terminals including three super-post panamax cranes; \$30 million from the Province of British Columbia; \$25 million from CN Rail towards the terminal's rail-related infrastructure; and \$25 million from the Prince Rupert Port Authority.

"We often say that Prince Rupert has been waiting 100 years for this day," said Don

Krusel, CEO of the Prince Rupert Port Authority at the terminal opening.

The vision of building Prince Rupert as an express trade corridor to Asia was something proposed in the early 1900s by railway tycoon Charles Melville Hays, who chose it as the destination for his Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, a continent-spanning line that would compete with the Canadian Pacific Railway for the lucrative Asian silk trade. But when Mr. Hays perished on the Titanic, the dream ended with him.

The intervening 100 years have witnessed rapid growth in many parts of Asia, increased global competitiveness, expanded world energy demands and changing dynamics in the Canadian economy. Combined, these elements are the driving force behind the formation of new partnerships that are helping bring Hays' vision of Western Canada and Prince Rupert as the nation's "Gateway to Asia," to life.

Since 1987, WD has worked with the Province of British Columbia and more recently, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, to position Canada to

The Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative is a set of integrated investment and policy measures focused on stimulating increased trade with the Asia-Pacific Region. Its mission is to strengthen Canada's competitive position in international commerce.

WD is making important contributions to Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative. Recently it launched a new report by the Asia Pacific Foundation that details how Canadian companies are successfully doing business with Asia.

Leading the Way provides an analysis of 15 Canadian companies, large and small, with successful business strategies focused on Asia. They represent a growing number of Canadian firms that are actively developing new approaches to doing business with Asia. Individual reports and detailed analysis of each of the companies are available at: www.asiapacificgateway.net

capitalize on emerging opportunities in the Asia Pacific Rim.

In addition to funding the Prince Rupert Port expansion, WD is contributing to Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative by consulting broadly with stakeholders across Canada and providing strategic advice on how best to leverage economic opportunity from this major investment.

The arrival of three super-post panamax container cranes at the Fairview terminal marked the new Prince Rupert terminal officially open for business.





#### **Expanding** horizons for Canada's only Arctic port

by Lee Gregg

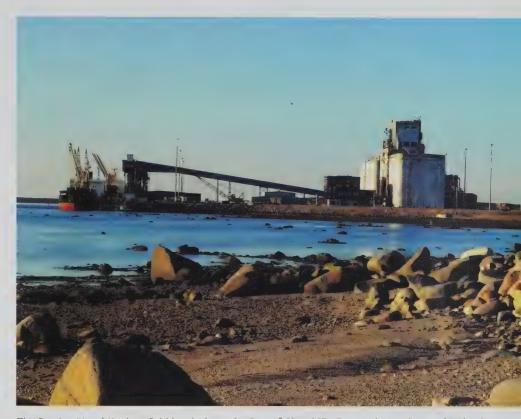
Canada's only deep-water Arctic seaport is bustling with activity. Long touted as the most economical entryway for shipping goods to and from the prairies to markets in Europe, Russia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Churchill marked several milestones over the past year that are helping to cement its emerging position as an economic throughway for Western Canada.

"The Churchill Port had a banner year in 2007," said Bill Drew, Executive Director, Churchill Gateway Development Corporation. "The port recorded near record grain shipments with over 620,000 metric tonnes of grain shipped and the first ever shipment of grain from Churchill to Halifax took place using an Arctic supply vessel."

WD and the Province of Manitoba are looking to further develop the Port as a North American hub. The two partnered to jointly invest \$4.2 million over a sixyear period in the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation (CGDC). The funding is being used to develop a market research and initiative plan.

"The funding we received has allowed us to market the port and increase business through the port," said Drew. "We have been able to identify

(2014-01) 49991-14



The Russian Vessel Kapitan Sviridov docks at the Port of Churchill. Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland have expressed interest in future trade through the Churchill Port. PHOTO COURTESY OF HUDSON BAY PORT COMPANY

potential commodities and associated international buyers and suppliers, and match these with potential Canadian industries."

The plan is building on the Port's recent successes, most notably the arrival of an inbound container ship from Russia, which unloaded a shipment of fertilizer bound for western Canadian markets. The Kapitan Sviridov, owned by the Murmansk Shipping Company, was chartered by the Farmers of North America and Acron, the Russian producer of the fertilizer. The ship was then reloaded with 20,000 tonnes of Canadian wheat destined for Italian markets

This was the Port's first shipment from Russia and an important step in establishing an Arctic Bridge between Churchill and Murmansk, Russia.

#### **Upgrades Planned**

Plans are now underway to upgrade the port's facilities and the rail line linking Churchill with Winnipeg. This will lead to increased trade and a stronger mid-continent trade corridor - a corridor connecting Canada to the U.S. and Mexico, with Churchill as the northern hub.

#### The Port of Churchill

- provides vessels with much shorter routes to overseas markets.
- is less time-consuming to navigate than the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River ports, and
- · is less expensive in terms of handling and transportation costs.



## Multimillion-dollar federal programs addressing the mountain pine beetle epidemic

by Tom Wakefield

In January 2007, the Government of Canada launched the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program (MBP),

What is a mountain pine beetle?

They are the size of a grain of rice and have a voracious appetite for pine. Individually their impact is minute, but in swarms, they overpower a tree's natural defence. They chew their way inside a tree, leaving behind a toxic blue fungus that blocks water and nutrient movement, and leaves the tree defenceless. Eggs laid within the tree give birth to new larvae, which continue feeding on the tree. Once mature, the insect leaves the dead tree, flying to find their next meal.

Normally these insects play an important role in the life of a forest; they attack old or weakened trees, speeding the development of a younger forest. But in epidemic proportions, their effects are profound. By the end of 2008, it is estimated that 50 per cent of British Columbia's mature pine forests will be destroyed as a result of the insect. By 2013, that figure could rise to 80 per cent.

led by Natural Resources Canada. The program commits \$400 million over the next two years for measures that address both the short-term and long-term impacts of the beetle infestation.

Currently, Canada is
battling the largest
mountain pine beetle
outbreak in North
American history and
the economic impacts will
be substantial – in the billions
of dollars. Communities and their

of dollars. Communities and their economies will change, and not just in B.C. The mountain pine beetle is spreading, moving its way east to Alberta and potentially to Canada's northern boreal forest.

The MPB is supporting efforts to control the spread of the beetle, recover as much economic value as possible from destroyed timber, and protect forests and communities from the risk of wildfire.

Along with Transport Canada, WD is a strong partner in the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program. Besides managing the Community Economic Diversification Initiative, WD has provided nearly \$20 million to support airport improvement projects in Prince George, Kamloops and Kelowna. The improvements will expand tourism opportunities within the regions



Red-coloured needles indicate a forest affected by the mountain pine beetle.

PHOTO CREDIT: NRCAN

served by these airports, while helping local businesses access the global marketplace.

"Communities are feeling the impact of the beetle infestation today, and they will feel it for years to come," says Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources Canada. "Our Mountain Pine Beetle Program is helping communities address short-term needs, such as fire protection, and we're also helping them address the long-term impacts by investing in efforts to broaden the economic foundations of communities."

For more information about the Federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program, visit www.nrcan.gc.ca ■

#### forest. forward.

moving beyond the pine beetle



#### **CEDI:** helping hard-hit communities overcome the mountain pine beetle

by Tom Wakefield

· To help Mackenzie, a B.C. community dependent on forestry jobs, and other communities in the Cariboo Region of B.C. adversely affected by the mountain pine beetle epidemic, \$370,000 was provided to the College of New Caledonia to purchase mobile training equipment.

The project was funded through the Community Economic Diversification Initiative (CEDI), which is part of the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program.

This investment means that for the first time, residents in the region will have local access to training programs for high-demand skills such as welding. Residents will be able to develop the skills they need for jobs in the construction and metalwork industries right in their community.



"There is a shortage of skilled workers of all kinds across the province," says Mayor Killam. "Being able to address some of our specific labour demands right here in the community gives us a competitive edge in both recruiting and retaining Mackenzie workers."

WD helped develop CEDI, recognizing that a vast number of small B.C. communities have economies fuelled by the forest industry. Through CEDI, WD will invest over \$33 million in projects that support economic growth, job creation and the future sustainability of communities hurt by the infestation.

WD manages CEDI, and has solicited Expressions of Interest for funding from community leaders and other key stakeholders from the most at-risk B.C. communities, including numerous First Nations communities.

To be eligible, projects under the program must target four key areas: community capacity building; economic diversification; value-added forestry; and economic infrastructure. All projects are to be completed by March 31, 2009.

For more information about the Community Economic Diversification Initiative, visit www.wd.gc.ca/9622\_ ENG\_ASP.asp ■

Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources, stands in front of a locally manufactured mountain pine beetle wood podium to announce the \$33 million Community Economic Diversification Initiative at the Prince George Railway and Forestry Museum.

#### Mackenzie: **Battling the** beetle

The town of Mackenzie, British Columbia, has a proud history. Its name derives from Alexander Mackenzie, the first explorer to cross North America, who in 1793 struck camp where the town is now located.

Sitting at the southern end of Willston Lake – the largest manmade reservoir in North America - Mackenzie was born out of a booming pulp and lumber industry in the 1960s.

Now with a population of 4,500, forestry remains the town's most important economic driver.

It's for this very reason that the future of Mackenzie is in jeopardy.

"We are one of the most forestry dependent communities in the province and have already started to feel the impact of the mountain pine beetle with mill curtailments and the loss of jobs," says Mayor Stephanie Killam.

Many communities across B.C.'s Interior are facing a similar fate. Due to the mountain pine beetle infestation, these communities are being forced to seek other economic mainstays.

"Diversifying the economy has always been a top priority in our community," notes the Mayor. "But there is no magic bullet for diversification. It takes time."



## Addressing the challenges of urbanization

With 80 per cent of Canadians living in urban communities, Canada is one of the most urbanized countries in the world. Migration from rural to urban areas is making our cities dynamic places of economic growth, but is also leading to a host of challenges for many rural areas as they struggle with the loss of population and economic opportunity.

Governments and communities are challenged to work together to find ways to respond to these pressures.

During the 2007 Alberta Community Futures (CF) Symposium held in Calgary in September, The Globe and Mail political columnist, John Ibbitson, told participants that Canada's urbanization trends are creating increased tension between growing cities and rural decline. He said that the national challenge is to ensure that urban areas do not flourish at the expense of the vitality of rural communities.

Rural diversification is one of WD's key priorities in 2008-09 and it believes Community Futures organizations are ideally positioned to generate viable solutions to the challenges.

#### WEI's 2008-2009

- Technology Commercialization
- Trade & Investment
- Business Productivity & Competitiveness
- · Rural Diversification
- Management Excellence

#### CFs respond effectively to rural

Speaking at an awards gala that was part of the ambitious, three-day learning symposium organized to cultivate leaders of Alberta's CF network, MP Lee Richardson acknowledged the importance of CF's community-based approach in strengthening the economic viability of the West's rural communities.

"Your local networking is vital to success where it matters — on the ground, in the communities," said Richardson.

#### Collaborative planning key to success

Community Futures leaders will achieve even greater success if they:

- · work together
- identify meaningful goals, strategies and performance indicators, and
- set priorities that effectively respond to shared community issues.

That's what workshop facilitator Glenn Tecker told Alberta's CF leaders during an intense planning session at the symposium, which focused on learning and the economic potential of collaboration.

The event, which attracted the participation of more than

**Community**Futures

200 key leaders from Alberta's 27 Community Futures offices and WD representatives, sought to enhance cooperation and align priorities among CF network members. It also enabled them to share best practices and develop the framework for a clear, common and actionable strategy for 2008-09.

Doug Maley, WD's Assistant Deputy Minister for Alberta, told participants that WD is keen to support projects that align with WD's priorities, including those that add value to traditional sectors such as agriculture, forestry and mining.

Conference participants said they were anxious to return to their communities and build on the ideas generated in the planning sessions and further engage

their community representatives in what had been started.



#### Three Alberta Community **Futures** projects recognized with Minister's **Award**

Several unique projects initiated by Community Futures in Alberta were recognized with WD's Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation at the 2007 Community Futures of Alberta Symposium.

Three Alberta CF organizations -Community Futures Lakeland, Entre-Corp and East Central - took the bronze for their collaborative Defence Industry Development project to match local suppliers with procurement opportunities at Canadian Forces Bases Suffield, Wainwright and Cold Lake. The silver went to Community Futures Entre-Corp for their City Centre Business Investment Program – a loan program that leveraged funds for downtown Medicine Hat businesses to undertake necessary building upgrades.

Top honours went to the Corporate Education Network project, a partnership involving the governments of Canada and Alberta, Palliser Economic Partnership, Medicine Hat College and Community Futures Entre-Corp that launched a community website - www. cenetwork.ca - designed to provide a "one-stop-shop" to help businesses and individuals in South East Alberta with their job training needs.



#### Women's business program garners Minister's Award

by Jean Collins

The Community Futures (CF) Partners of Saskatchewan presented CF Visions North and its manager, Bill Hogan, with the 2007 WD Minister's Award of Excellence and Innovation for an innovative new program it developed and implemented that is equipping women with the confidence and knowhow to enter the job market or create their own. The unique entrepreneurship program targets the residents of the La Ronge women's shelter.

In its first year, the three-month program offered business preparatory courses in marketing, finance and business law. In year two, the program grew to nine months and 10 courses

ranging from basic math, writing and life skills to entrepreneurial classes in business planning to better meet participants' needs.

After completing the program, two participants began exploring the feasibility of establishing their own arts and crafts business and are now considering a co-operative approach to a beadwork venture. Another participant observed that while she may not start her own business, she'd gained the selfconfidence to apply for jobs she'd never considered before.

"If the program changes one woman's life, then it's as successful as any loan," says Hogan. "This (program) is a legacy for their children and their future."

Left to right: Sean Blewett, General Manager, CF Entre-Corp; Rick Derbyshire, Chair, CF Entre-Corp; Louise Connolly. Board Chair, CF Alberta: MP Lee Richardson, Calgary Centre.





## Banff Venture Forum a serious opportunity for angels and entrepreneurs

With an annual growth rate of about 10 per cent, the Banff Venture Forum has seen over \$280 million in investment or merger and acquisition funds raised by participants in its nine-year history. At the latest Forum, 45 companies presented before 36 investors in separate Information Technology and Energy Technology streams. Held annually, the Forum focuses on areas outside of traditional natural resource sectors.

The Banff Venture Forum is where Western Canada's most innovative and promising technology entrepreneurs come to present their ideas to some of the most influential angel investors and venture capital organizations across Canada and around the world. One of North America's premier technology investment forums, it enables innovators to connect with investors and attract the capital they need to grow their businesses.

Nationally and internationally competitive, high-growth and high-tech companies help diversify the economy. Recognizing the critical role these businesses play, WD has facilitated their growth, innovation and competitiveness by sponsoring the Forum since 2001. In a program message to its 200 attendees, WD Minister Rona Ambrose highlighted that, "Our most important role is to ensure a competitive marketplace that enables the private sector to compete worldwide on the basis of its innovative products, services and technologies."

It's no surprise that early and growthstage companies covet the opportunity to present at the conference. With its unique business networking format and access to serious, pre-qualified investors from Canada, the United States and Europe, the objective is access to capital.

Participating investors are typically either Angel investors – affluent individuals

"OUR MOST IMPORTANT ROLE
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TECHNOLOGIES."

using their own money for business start-up or growth – or Venture Capital investors – professional, hired investors managing a pool of investments from investment banks, other financial institutions and wealthy individuals – who bring both management expertise and capital investment in exchange for an equity interest in a company.

These influential investors are exposed to the high-calibre investment opportunities that exist in Alberta and throughout the West. For early stage technology entrepreneurs, that level of exposure is a step towards fulfilling their potential to take their ideas from the lab to the market.

Poised to celebrate its tenth anniversary in 2008, the Banff Venture Forum is expected to continue to play a vital role in the growth and facilitation of its participants' successes. This is good news for WD, for entrepreneurs, for investors and Canadians alike.

Joint panelists participating in "Meet the Investors – The Current Investment Landscape" session at the 2007 Banff Venture Forum.





## nextrade™ encourages exporters by offering peace of mind

by Jean Collins

What a difference a year makes. Empire Welding & Machining in North Battleford, Saskatchewan has expanded its sales and exports to such an extent that it requires a second shift to maximize the capacity of its manufacturing shop.

How does a company achieve this type of growth? Joseph Esquirol, president

Machinery developed by Empire Welding & Machining Ltd. has found markets as far away as Australia with the help of nextrade™.

and general manager of Empire Welding & Machining Ltd., used the customized financing services of nextrade™

finance. According to Esquirol, "nextrade™ finance was a real saviour."

Through several transactions over the last two years, Esquirol has accessed nextrade™ credit financing services for a total of \$1.3 million. Exporters can manage their cash flow, says Esquirol, because "nextrade™ finance does all the legwork and nurtures growth (of export firms) by providing loans on either end of the deal."



"nextrade™ finance has loaned Saskatchewan exporters more than \$10 million and is focused on supporting the growth of its clients," says nextrade™ executive director Glen Millard. "With recent growth in the capital pool, we are now able to keep pace with the demand." WD invested \$525,125 in the capital pool.

For more information, visit www.nextrade.ca. ■

## Trade service links small businesses to global markets

by Islian Clover

Western Canada was built with the pioneering spirit of entrepreneurs. Today, the same pioneering spirit that built the West is driving entrepreneurs to look beyond geographic borders to forge new opportunities.

To help guide the way, Small Business BC recently launched the

TradeStart program, a service that provides resources to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in British Columbia prepare to enter international markets. By phone, web and in person, TradeStart offers information, referrals, seminars, specialized tools, and individual coaching to enable SMEs to expand their markets and strengthen their competitiveness.

With \$246,000 from WD, Small Business BC is working with network partners, community organizations and other orders of government to deliver this program. To ensure consistency, maximize shared resources and share best practices, trade services will be offered at varying degrees by all Canada

Business service centres in Western Canada.

"Small Business BC is very pleased to see B.C.'s export sector receiving support for its growing contribution to the economy," said Tara Gilbert, CEO of Small Business BC. "B.C. has a vibrant small business sector that is responsible for over one-third of all B.C. exports. This is an amazing statistic considering only 1.5 per cent of the province's small businesses are involved in export."

TradeStart serves importers as well as exporters, offering information on such topics as productivity enhancement, expansion of trade markets and competitive strategies for success in the global market.



## Manitoba's *Acces Direct* Promotions wins micro-company award

of David Meister

Micro-company *Acces Direct Promotions* won big accolades recently when it was named winner of the *Lauriers de la PME* 2007 award in the micro-companies category.

Company owner Michèle Lécuyer-Hutton likened the awards ceremony, a gala event that was held in Ottawa in November 2007, to the Academy Awards and says she was stunned to hear her name read out.

Every two years, RDÉE Canada, the national francophone economic development network, hosts the *Lauriers de la PME* competition highlighting the importance of francophone businesses outside of Quebec to the Canadian economy.

Michèle Lecuyer Hutton is all smiles as she shows off her Lauriers de la PME 2007.
Micro-Company award and her "lucky coin."
Photo BY DANIEL ELBAZE

The experience has been good for Winnipegbased Acces Direct Promotions, a promotional products business. As a result of her win, Lécuyer-Hutton was featured in various francophone media in Manitoba and in a documentary about the Lauriers

de la PME 2007 award winners.

Lécuyer-Hutton started *Acces Direct Promotions* in 2001 to help Manitoba's francophone community, in her words, "market with product." She received assistance from the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM), who helped with business planning and arranging a mentor for her first year in business.

The company's client base has since expanded beyond the francophone community, with Lécuyer-Hutton visiting clients personally to develop relationships, rather than having them come to her. She delivers all products in person in order to see her clients' initial reaction to their promotional pieces.

Word-of-mouth is *Acces Direct*Promotions' best form of advertising with Lécuyer-Hutton's volunteer work in the community opening many doors and providing her with the chance to give something back.



Acces Direct Promotions owner Lécuyer-Hutton in front of what she fondly calls her "primary office."

Lécuyer-Hutton's advice for someone starting out?

"Get a mentor and research how different organizations can help you, such as CDEM and the Women's Enterprise Initiative," she says. "There is a lot of help out there. I see so many people who just want the business loan, but there is a lot of good advice that people can use too."

Lécuyer-Hutton will continue growing her business and hopes to be able to help another Manitoba company win the next *Lauriers de la PME* award. Neither of these should be a problem considering her current success and continued involvement in the St. Boniface Chamber of Commerce; the Women Business Owners of Winnipeg; Francofunds; and Pluri-Elles, a non-profit organization that provides women with the tools to meet their personal and professional goals.

For more information on *Acces Direct Promotions*, visit www.acces-direct.com



#### Fransaskois economic development organization celebrates 60 years





by Charles Dumont

With 60 years of providing economic development services to Fransaskois entrepreneurs under its belt, the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS) has much to celebrate.

Since its start in 1947, the CCS has been a driving force behind economic development in Saskatchewan's francophone community. With a

A member of Les Cireux d'Semelles. a traditional French folk ensemble, musician Justin Bell speaks with enthusiasm of the service and expertise he and his band received through the CCS.

Les Cireux d'Semelles received funding from the CCS to finance their debut album in 2006. Since then, the group has gone on to form its own independent record label to showcase and promote other francophone artists across the province.

"The CCS not only secures financing, it also enables the creation of partnerships and the sharing of our culture in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada," said Bell. "It's important to have this type of organization to protect artists and culture, especially in the case of minorities that have difficulty self-financing or in starting a new business or a project on their own."

strong history rooted in encouraging cooperative businesses – from credit unions and farming co-ops to cooperative stores, daycares and publishing houses - the CCS has long promoted the value of cooperation and the importance of a solid economic base.

WD has worked with the CCS for the past nine years. Ongoing support from the Department is enabling the CCS to answer the needs and challenges of the francophone business community in urban and rural Saskatchewan.

"Since working with WD, we've definitely evolved as an organization and now offer more programs and services to the Fransaskois community," said Robert Therrien, Executive Director of the CCS.

With a main office in Regina and branch offices in Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Ponteix, the CCS reach is expansive, serving francophone businesses as far away as La Ronge in northern

Saskatchewan. The organization offers training, access to capital, information services, networking and marketing advice.

"The 60th anniversary of the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan is an opportunity to demonstrate the vitality and viability of French economic development in Saskatchewan," added Therrien. "From the very beginning, the importance of a strong economy has been a priority of the Franco-Saskatchewanian community and I believe that the CCS has answered this call."

The CCS is part of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network. The network consists of several integrated organizations that provide entrepreneurs with the financing and business expertise they need to start a business or make it grow.

To learn more about Le Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan, visit www.ccs-sk.ca or call 1-800-670-0879.

Saskatchewan francophone folk band Les Cireux d'Semelles



### RETROSPECTIVE

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#### Sixty-seven years of flight training in Southport

A \$16.8 million investment in 1989 enabled Kelowna Flightcraft Ltd. to win a \$1.77-billion, 22-year military contract in 2005.

The Second World War was a major turning point in Canadian history, transforming a largely agrarian country to an industrial nation producing aircraft, ships, weapons, vehicles, and raw materials.

A good part of this transformation was the result of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which saw thousands of pilots, navigators, and other aircrew from around the world trained in Canada. Royal Canadian Air Force Station Portage La Prairie (Manitoba) was one of 107 schools established across Canada as this country's major contribution to Allied air support during World War II.

With the 1989 announcement that Canadian Forces Base Portage-la-Prairie would close, the town and surrounding communities rallied together to keep their aviation history alive, and protect the 750 direct jobs and \$30 million in annual military expenditures that contributed to the Portage and district economies.

Southport Aerospace Centre Inc., a non-profit organization, was established to develop and market the former base into an aerospace training centre for both military and commercial flight training, as well as aircraft repairs, maintenance, and other commercial and industrial uses.



Southport Aerospace Centre. 2008 marks 67 years of continuous flight training in the community. Southport remains one of a few North American industrial locations to maintain its own airport.

For the project to be viable, Southport required significant funding as the base made the transition from military to commercial management. Lacking the critical mass of tenants and activities to contribute to infrastructure and operating costs, Southport approached WD for assistance.

"WD worked closely with Southport in the early stages by providing financial support," said Barry Feller, CEO of Southport. "This partnership enabled us to establish the dynamic community we see today."

WD provided \$16.8 million to upgrade air traffic control equipment, airfield lighting, student facilities, and other infrastructure. Today the former base is home to the Canada Wings Aviation Training Centre, a consortium of civilian contractors led by Kelowna Flightcraft Ltd. who work with Canadian military personnel providing flight training, and advanced multi-engine and helicopter pilot training.

In 2005, a \$1.77 billion, 22-year military contract was granted to Kelowna Flightcraft, with Canada Wings providing the training. Southport expects to create over 2,000 jobs over the next five years.

For information, visit www.southport.mb.ca.

#### Canadian Publication Mail Agreement no. 40063159

If undeliverable please return to: Western Economic Diversification Canada Suite 500, Gillin Building 141 Laurier Avenue West Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5]3

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## WEST

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### **Innovation** engine

Improving manufacturing productivity through learning and innovation p.18

Western Biotech star **BioMS** named biotech company of the year

> **NAIT** expands trades training capacity



Western Economic Diversification Canada de l'Ouest Canada

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Disponible aussi en français ISSN: 1495-6802 (print) ISSN: 1495-6543 (online)

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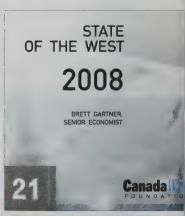
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## MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE RONA AMBROSE

#### WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Canada (WD) is proud of the work it does, in partnership with western organizations, to build a stronger economic future for Western Canada.

That future, like our history, will to a large extent be based on trade. As a relatively small market, our success depends on reaching out to international markets. Through initiatives like the North Asia Technology Capabilities Study Tour, WD is helping western businesses and research institutes build international relationships to enhance their success in the global marketplace.

Science and technology represents another significant economic opportunity. WD supports a wide range of initiatives that are strengthening western innovation, like the International Science and Technology Partnerships China-Alberta Program, which will enhance the commercialization of new technologies by building research and development partnerships with organizations in China.

Responding to the current labour shortage is another priority, and WD has invested in a number of initiatives that are increasing the supply of skilled labour in the West. On May 9, I had the honour of participating in the official opening of the new Women Building Futures (WBF) training centre in Edmonton. WBF was founded with a vision to create positive change, one woman at a time – and this vision is producing results.

I invite you to read on to learn more about these, and other WD initiatives that are building a stronger future for the West, and for western Canadians.



The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P. President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada,

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification





## FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL COLLABORATION STRENGTHENS WESTERN ECONOMY

WD to negotiate new Western Economic Partnership Agreements with four western provinces

WHEN IT COMES TO ACHIEVING major economic goals, the Government of Canada and the four western provinces agree. Each has found the Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPAs) to be an invaluable tool.

That is why WD Minister Ambrose and her provincial counterparts responsible for economic development and science and technology were pleased to announce that they will proceed with negotiations for a new round of WEPAs that will build on the success of the previous agreements, which expired March 31, 2008.

Under the new agreements, WD will provide \$25 million for each western province, matched by the provincial governments, providing a total of \$50 million in funding for each province over the next five years – a total investment of \$200 million.

Aimed at strengthening economic activity and improving quality of life in western Canadian communities, the new agreements will aim to achieve national economic development goals, while recognizing the unique characteristics of each provincial economy.

Each provincial government supports the WEPA priorities of enhancing value added activity, increasing innovation and strengthening international competitiveness. In addition, they have identified individual priorities that respond to specific provincial challenges and opportunities.

Manitoba's priorities over the next five years will include supporting knowledge based research and development, increasing value-added production in traditional industries, supporting trade and investment promotion, enhancing productivity and competitiveness and promoting economic development through tourism opportunities. Saskatchewan will focus on immigration policy, inter-provincial trade and transportation corridors. Alberta has identified expanding its knowledgebased economy and technology commercialization as priorities, while British Columbia will invest in labour and skills development, and developing a new relationship with First Nations.

These flexible agreements are unique to Western Canada. By encouraging joint planning and decision-making, and focusing on shared priorities,

the agreements help reduce duplication and increase the effectiveness of economic development activities. Aw

## Federal priorities for the 2008 round of WEPA agreements include:

- Supporting the creation and growth of knowledge-based R&D and business clusters and the commercialization of new products, technologies and services;
- Increasing value-added production in traditional industries:
- Supporting trade and investment promotion; and
- Working with western Canadian businesses, industry and research organizations to enhance business productivity and competitiveness.





## NEW AGREEMENTS TO BUILD ON THE SUCCESS OF PREVIOUS WEPAS

Agreements have been an effective economic development tool since 1998



Birdseye View of Booster and Storage Rings Photo credit: Canadian Light Source Inc., University of Saskatchewan.

#### WD AND THE WESTERN PROVINCIAL

governments have been collaborating through WEPAs since 1998. To date, those agreements have invested a total of \$360 million in more than 354 projects across the West.

A recent evaluation of the previous agreements found they have effectively advanced innovative projects and leveraged significant additional financial investment from non-government sources. Every dollar invested by WD and the provinces through the earlier WEPAs leveraged \$0.65 from other sources, a number that is expected to continue to increase as projects mature.

The agreements have supported numerous initiatives that are strengthening value-added activities in traditional sectors, increasing the commercialization of new technologies, training skilled workers and increasing Aboriginal participation in the workforce.

For example, in 2003 the WEPA provided joint federal-provincial funding of \$3 million to the City of Prince Rupert, British Columbia for the construction of new docking facilities to accommodate large cruise ships. Since

2004, the number of annual passengers welcomed at the Northland Terminal has grown from 60,000 to 100,000, and it is estimated that number could exceed 250,000 by 2014.

The Composites Innovation Centre located in Smartpark at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg received \$6.6 million from the WEPA in 2006. The expansion of the centre, which supports the Manitoba composites cluster by undertaking research and development and commercialization projects with industry partners, has resulted in the involvement of over 60 companies and the transfer of new technologies to five companies.

## Previous WEPAs have invested \$360 million in more than 354 projects across the West

In Alberta, Recent WEPAs have supported the expansion of the knowledge-based economy and development and commercialization of technologies including \$2 million in joint funding for programs at TEC Edmonton, a regional business incubator that helps nascent companies, inventors, entrepreneurs, and investors generate and commercialize new technologies. TEC Edmonton provided assistance to a multitude of regional technology focused companies, created 18 spin-off companies and secured more than \$10.5 million in venture capital.

In Saskatchewan, a \$7.6 million WEPA investment in 2006 allowed the Canadian Light Source to add seven new beam lines, enabling six distinct types of research. Research undertaken at the facility, in partnership with universities, has increased the knowledge base in areas such as biomedical imaging, macromolecular crystallography, and micro and nano devices, capturing the interest of national and international firms.

In the years ahead, the new WEPA agreements will continue to stimulate economic growth, expand the knowledge economy, and modernize infrastructure to create new jobs and new opportunities for western Canadians. AW

#### VALUE-ADDED PROJECTS HELP FORESTRY SECTOR ADJUST TO GLOBAL CONDITIONS

Initiatives will maintain Western Canada's competitiveness

#### NEW COMPETITORS, CHANGING

consumer expectations and a weak U.S. dollar are creating additional challenges for the forestry industry. But three programs, announced by WD this winter, will keep Western Canada competitive in the changing forest product marketplace by helping wood product manufacturers explore new methods, new markets and new products.

The projects – led by the Forintek division of FPInnovations, a not-for-profit organization that creates science-based solutions for the forest sector – will help improve productivity and profitability in value-added wood products, such as millwork, furniture, flooring, kitchen cabinets, housing components and wood pellets.

In B.C. \$126,000 was allocated to expand the Woodmark Quality Certification Program, a first-of-its-kind initiative that aims to trademark and promote British Columbia's value-added wood products abroad. The objective is for

kitchen cabinet and furniture manufacturers to apply the best practices identified with the trademark quality standards to reduce their costs and promote a standard of Canadian excellence in the world.

Roland Baumeister, Manager of Value-Added Manufacturing for FP Innovations said, "When companies implement these techniques, they can reduce their amount of rework, increase product quality and improve productivity – all essential elements to survival in this extremely competitive market."

In Saskatchewan, the province and WD are investing \$800,000 over three years for Forintek employees to work with mills and value-added manufacturing firms. Forintek staff will foster increased innovation, market development and access, as well as product diversification to create a more competitive manufacturing industry.

In Manitoba, a \$1.178 million

contribution will extend Forintek's Value-added and Wood Technology Program for two more years. The investment will help support the efforts of three industry advisors, who are working with the province's more than 325 value-added wood products businesses to diversify, increase their competitiveness and extend market reach. All three projects were funded under WD's WEPAs with the western provinces.

Alberta is just completing a similar multi-year partnership with Forintek. Its successes include a new understanding that traditional industry concerns about the cost and quality of panel construction – the assembly of factorybuilt building parts on site – may be unfounded. Testing confirmed that, with new technologies and processes, panel construction can offer significant productivity advantages through faster construction, less waste and a lower requirement for skilled labour. AW

From forest to market, FPInnovations – Forintek Division is providing science-based solutions to the forest sector to help improve productivity and profitability in value-added wood products. Courtesy of FPInnovations – Forintek Division





Left to right: Doug Horner, Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology; Minister Rona Ambrose; Stuart Wilson, Vice President, International Science and Technology Partnerships Canada Inc. (ISTPCanada).

#### COLLABORATIONS BUILD INTERNATIONAL S&T STRENGTH

WITH GLOBAL MARKETS BECOMING INCRESINGLY INTEGRATED AND DRIVEN by innovative new technologies, today's businesses are competing in a far more complex environment than their predecessors.

Now, two new initiatives will keep Alberta competitive by creating more opportunities to develop, commercialize and export new products and services.

The Alberta International Business Partnering Program (AIBPP) will help companies in the Information and Communications Technologies and Life Sciences sectors capitalize on opportunities in China, California and India.

By providing highly-focused information and training – including symposia, seminars and trade missions – the 20-month program provides businesses a cost effective and efficient means of building technology partnerships, commercializing new technologies, and exporting their products and services. Participating companies will also have an opportunity to temporarily locate in Hong Kong or California as they begin conducting business in those markets. Companies in these sectors considering entry into the target markets will be better equipped with the information they require to assess and potentially pursue new markets.

"Building global technology partnerships has become an imperative for all regions of the world because technological innovation is now one of the most important factors affecting economic and social development." – Dr. Henri Rothschild, President and CEO of ISTP Canada

With more than \$1.1 million in combined funding from WD and the Government of Alberta, the AIBPP will increase the number, and success, of Alberta companies pursuing commercialization and export opportunities in key international markets.

#### STRENGTHENING R&D THROUGH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

A second program, the International Science and Technology Partnerships (ISTP) China-Alberta Program, will build research and development partnerships with organizations in China, Canada's second largest trading partner after the United States.

The three-year program will help businesses and researchers benefit from the Canada-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement by funding cost-shared R&D projects proposed by industry and academic research institutions.

By providing access to China's best facilities, equipment, talent and knowledge, the ISTP China-Alberta Program will facilitate technology collaboration and commercialization.

The Alberta initiative will be led by International Science and Technology Partnerships Canada Inc., a not-for-profit organization that also delivers the national ISTP program on behalf of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.

The Alberta program will be supported by a \$400,000 investment from WD, matched by the Province. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada will also contribute \$400,000 through ISTP Canada. AW

## BIOTECH COMPANY OF THE YEAR

EDMONTON-BASED B10MS MEDICAL HAS been named company of the year by BIOTECanada, the industry association for Canada's biotech industry. The prestigious Gold Leaf Award was presented at the 2008 BIO International Convention in San Diego on June 17.

"This award recognizes the significant efforts made by the dedicated employees at BioMS and the great progress we've made," said Kevin Giese, President and CEO.

#### To 2006, WD in obligated 115 million to establish TEC Edmonton's new highly

BioMS has developed a treatment for multiple sclerosis that is being evaluated in clinical trials in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. In December 2007, the company entered into an \$87 million worldwide licensing and development agreement with global pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly.

In the early stages of commercialization, BioMS benefited from services provided by regional incubation hub TEC Edmonton. AW



## MEDICAL DEVICE COMPANIES MAKING STRIDES TOWARD COMMERCIALIZATION

TWO MANITOBA MEDICAL DEVICE companies that got their start at the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre in Winnipeg are

Research Centre in Winnipeg are now moving their success out of the laboratory and into the marketplace.

Intelligent Hospital Systems, which focuses on the design and development of automated solutions for hospital environments, has developed the Robotic IV Automation system (RIVA), a self-contained unit for preparing intravenous syringes and bags for both adult and pediatric patients. By automating the admixture preparation, RIVA enhances patient safety through improved sterility, reduced compounding risk and increased dose accuracy.

The invention has generated worldwide interest. Intelligent Hospital Systems has signed contracts with three leading hospitals in the U.S. and several more deals are in the works.

The company currently employs 71 people – the majority of them in high-knowledge jobs – and is forecast to have nearly 100 employees by the end of the year.

Monteris Medical is also making strides toward commercialization. Now located at the University of Manitoba's Smartpark, the company has developed a novel MRI-guided focused Laser Interstitial Thermal Therapy (f-LITT) for the treatment of brain tumors that are typically untreatable by conventional methods.

Monteris Medical's trademarked AutoLITT system uses heat to destroy tumors from the inside, so surrounding tissue is not damaged. The system is not only faster and more precise than traditional methods it is also less invasive, allowing most procedures to be done as day surgery. The company has completed animal trials and is planning to begin human trials in the near future.

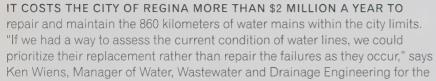
"Being located at St. Boniface was a substantial help to our corporate evolution," said Jim Duncan, Monteris Medical CEO. "Having convenient access to the MRI at the Asper Centre was critical to the development of both our hardware and software."

More than 75 per cent of Monteris Medical's 24-person staff is employed in high technology-engineering jobs

In 2005, WD provided \$390,000 to the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre to create incubator space for fledgling biotechnology companies in the I.H. Asper Clinical Research Institute. The investment is contributing to the success of the West's growing medical device cluster. There are more than 200 medical device companies employing an estimated 4,000 people in Western Canada. Annual sales are in excess of \$5 billion. AW

## REGINA PIPE CRAWLER AIMS TO REDUCE MUNICIPAL MAINTENANCE COSTS

Field trial version expected to be ready within six months



City of Regina.

Soon, Regina – and other municipalities – may be able to do just that. A University of Regina research team, led by Dr. Mehran Mehrandezh and Dr. Raman Paranjape, has developed a robot capable of inspecting water pipes while they remain in service.

The Regina Pipe Crawler is capable of moving up and down pressurized pipes from 15 to 20 cm in diameter. An operator controls the movement of the robot, directing it when to stop and make an inspection.

The project, which won a recent American Society for Heating and Air Conditioning Engineers' university design competition, could revolutionize pipe inspection for municipalities, as well as industries such as mining and oil and gas.

#### "Communities of Tomorrow support has been critical for us."

The Regina Pipe Crawler received funding through the Communities of Tomorrow (CT) partnership, a unique "community environmental laboratory" that brings all three levels of government, research institutes and educational institutions together to develop, demonstrate and commercialize environmental technologies.

WD invested \$5 million, through the Western Economic Partnership Agreement, to the CT initiative, which is establishing Regina as a leader in sustainable municipal development.

The research team is moving toward commercialization of their invention and hopes to have a field trial version of the Regina Pipe Crawler ready within six months.

"Communities of Tomorrow support has been critical for us," says Dr. Mehrandezh. "Without it, we would never have been able to reach this level this quickly." •••



The Regina Pipe Crawler comprises of two waterproof enclosures connected via a universal joint, one holding the motor and battery and the other electronics and sensors. Spring-loaded wheels support the weight of the robot moving against gravity, while angled wheels in front, when turning, can generate a forward/backward linear motion inside the pipe.



#### Dr. Marco Marra, Director, BC Cancer Agency Genome Sciences Centre, Gery Salembier, ADM WD-BC,

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification Canada.

## B.C.'S LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR TO BENEFIT HEALTH AND INDUSTRY

#### REMEMBER HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY?

There have been a lot of changes since then, and today's biological sciences are part of the burgeoning life sciences sector that encompasses increasingly specific distinctions in biotechnology, value-added agriculture, health technologies, nutraceuticals and ocean industries. The practical applications are far greater than any high school student ever imagined.

Now, the B.C. life sciences sector's reputation for excellence will grow even stronger with the recent announcement of investments, totaling more than \$3.25 million, to equip three state-of-the-art facilities that will create new opportunities for collaboration and close the gap between their research and applications to benefit health and industry.

Recipients say that by building on the province's groundbreaking work in the emerging areas of genomics, proteomics and micro/nanotechnology, the funding will encourage commercialization and contribute to a more innovative and sustainable economy in the province and across the West.

In partnership with Genome BC, WD has allocated more than \$750,000 to purchase specialized equipment for nanotechnology and genetics research at the Networks of Centres of Excellence at the University of British Columbia and the B.C. Cancer Agency's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre.

Dr. Christoph Borchers, Director, University of Victoria, Genome BC Proteomics Centre, explains to Minister Ambrose, the use and function of pipettes, which are used to transfer samples at a defined volume in a highly accurate way. Dennis Bruchet, Manager, Innovation Unit, WD-BC, Gery Salembier, ADM, WD-BC, and a University of Victoria student observe from the back.



Long a catalyst for the advancement of life sciences in British Columbia, Genome BC is a not-for-profit organization that invests in and currently manages 28 large-scale genomics and proteomics research projects and four enabling technology platforms. Dr. Alan Winter, President and CEO of Genome BC, says he and his colleagues look forward to significant results from this "internationally unique collaboration" in DNA sequencing.

By increasing the speed and accuracy of gene sequencing, the new equipment will advance cancer research and lead to the discovery of new enzymes for industrial processes and new classes of stem cells with direct therapeutic potential. Other potential outcomes include earlier detection of pest outbreaks for the benefit of the agriculture and forestry industries.

WD will also provide more than \$1.9 million for Simon Fraser University's new MedChem lab, a sophisticated medicinal chemistry facility for preclinical drug discoveries that will also act as an incubator for early stage biotechnology companies. Dr. Mario Pinto, SFU Vice President, Research, says MedChem will be a vital resource, "the missing link in the chain from ideas to innovation to commercialization," for academic and industrial researchers, housing both start-up companies and the Centre for Drug Research and Development.

A \$600,000 investment in the University of Victoria Genome BC Proteomics Centre will provide specialized equipment for metabolomics, the growing field of research that examines how metabolites – small, simple molecules like vitamins or glucose – respond to changes in cellular activities instigated by bacteria or viruses. Areas of application for this research include trees affected by the mountain pine beetle infestation and early detection of bacterial contamination of fruit. Aw



Emerald Awards Plow Cat

## GAS RECOVERY INITIATIVE WINS CLIMATE CHANGE AWARD

Project recovers byproducts of drilling operations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

#### AN INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE BY THE COUNTY OF VERMILION River Gas Utility took home the Climate Change Award at the annual Emerald Awards ceremony in Edmonton this June.

By recovering vent gas – the natural gas that is a byproduct of drilling – so it can be used, rather than being vented into the environment, the Heavy Oil Casing Vent Gas Gathering project has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of about 490,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year – enough to fuel 7,500 homes year round.

The project is similar to rural gas co-ops that are common in oil producing areas, but because the gases are recovered by the natural gas utility, the surplus can be used for the community or sold to industry.

"It's real value-added," says Vermilion River County Reeve Don Whittaker, one of the original proponents of the Vent Gas Gathering project. "First, it's environmentally smart. Second, like the gas co-ops, we can offer our customers reduced rates on captured natural gas. But we can also further offset local pricing with our outside sales!"

In 2004, the project received \$380,000 in funding from the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program, a predecessor to the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund and the Building Canada Fund.

The Emerald Awards, an initiative of the Alberta Emerald Foundation (AEF), pay tribute to individuals, not-for-profits, communities, government institutions and corporations who demonstrate commitment to the preservation and enhancement of Alberta's environment.

AEF Board Chair David Day said, "Our award recipients quietly lead the way towards a sustainable future for our province, and their contributions are invaluable and an inspiration to all." AW

## CENTRE PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE ENERGY INDUSTRY

FORT ST. JOHN WILL BUILD A THREE-STORY interpretive learning centre for up to 60,000 visitors a year, paying tribute to B.C.'s historic and future relationship with the energy industry. Located along the Alaska Highway, in the heart of majestic Peace River country, the centre will serve as a gateway attraction, encouraging visitors to stop and visit the city.

The proposed 17,781 sq. ft. facility will be comprehensive – housing a 42 seat theatre, a kitchen/food services area, public area, conference rooms, retail space and offices – and will meet Silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards, with a green building design that includes solar power and a wind generator.

Interactive displays will tell the story of the energy industry – its pioneers, forms of energy, advancements in the industry and latest technologies – providing an educational experience for visitors and residents alike.

The project is made possible by \$2 million in federal and provincial funding through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, which supports local infrastructure upgrades and new construction projects, mainly in communities of fewer than 250,000 people.

At the announcement in January, local MP Jay Hill said that by building the centre, the City of Fort St. John is creating a significant tourist attraction that will strengthen the economy and benefit local residents as well as entrepreneurs.

"The energy industry is a vital component of British Columbia's history, as well as its future, and should be showcased this way, fully accessible to the public," he said. AW

## BCIT TO EXPAND RESEARCH INTO ENERGY EFFICIENT GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs reduce greenhouse gases by saving energy year round

#### FROM THE AIR, MAJOR CITIES OFTEN

look like massive grey scars cut out of the surrounding greenery. But, in cities like Vancouver, that is beginning to change. Green roofs—engineered roofing systems incorporating vegetation—are adding welcome spots of green, enlivening the sterility of the urban environment.

The British Columbia Institute of Technology's (BCIT) Centre for the Advancement of Green Roof Technology is a major reason for the growing acceptance of green roofs. The centre has been contributing to the body of research on green roof technologies since 2003.

In May 2008, BCIT received \$500,000 from WD to expand the Centre's applied research and demonstrations

During routine plant checks, a researcher gathers data from the research grids atop the green roof facility.

Photo courtesy: Scott McAlpine, BCIT

of green roof technologies to various climatic zones and to living wall technologies. Canada's diverse climate provides the perfect environment to test and improve the development of these technologies, which will support the continued development of the sustainable building technologies sector in B.C.

"This support from Western Economic Diversification will help move our green roof research forward in new and exciting ways," said Don Wright, President of BCIT. "At BCIT, our applied research activities directly involve industry so that we can work together to bring solutions to business. This funding and the support of our industry partners will help bring new ideas to architecture, design, construction and more."

The concept of green roofs is far from new. In Newfoundland, reconstructions of Norse sod houses dating from 1000 A.D. have been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, commemorating the earliest known European settlement in North America at L'Anse aux Meadows.

Today, the technology is becoming increasingly popular for its many benefits. By protecting the building from the summer sun and insulating the structure against winter cold, green roofs reduce greenhouse gases by saving energy year round. The rooftop green spaces also provide a welcome habitat for wildlife in urban areas and can be used to create recreational spaces, or even vegetable gardens. AW







left to right: Patrick Mattern, WD-Alberta Region; Dee Pannu, DFAIT-Northern Alberta; Chad Fleck, DFAIT-Ottawa; Kandice Johnson, WD-BC Region; and Yanning Peng, WD-Headquarters. Photo courtesy of Whalebone Productions Ltd.

## TOUR LINKS WESTERN TECHNOLOGY CAPABILITIES WITH ASIAN MARKETS

THE ASIA-PACIFIC GATEWAY AND CORRIDOR INITIATIVE – WHICH IS rapidly establishing Canada's West coast as the fastest and most efficient corridor between Asian and North American markets – is opening tremendous new opportunities for western Canadian businesses.

In March 2008, WD, along with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, and western provincial governments – hosted a Technology Capabilities Study Tour to explore opportunities for increasing trade and investment in new and emerging sectors of the western Canadian economy.

Eleven trade commissioners and science and technology officers from Canadian posts in China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan came to Western Canada to participate in the tour. Over the week-long event, they visited about two dozen cutting-edge facilities to learn more about the West's growing capabilities in four priority sectors – Information and Communication Technology Environment and Natural Resources Technologies, Life Sciences and Biotechnology, and Aerospace and Defence.

The week also gave western Canadian industries an opportunity to showcase their technologies and meet with consular staff that can help them develop business relationships in North Asia. In all, the trade commissioners held about 250 one-on-one meetings with high tech businesses in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton.

"The face-to-face meetings were the highlight. It was great to meet people for networking in hard to reach markets," said one participant. The sessions provided an "excellent opportunity to establish rapport and foster collaboration."

In 2004, a similar tour was held for Canadian trade commissioners posted in the U.S. Since then, WD has continued to work closely with its partners to pursue opportunities that emerged from that tour.

To date, WD has undertaken about 75 trade and investment projects, including a supplier development mission to help western Canadian companies sell their products to the U.S. Department of Defense and a trade mission to California that brought together venture capitalists, business leaders and Canadian expatriates to expand investment in western Canadian technologies such as nanotechnology and information communication technology.

WD hopes similar results will emerge from the North Asia Study Tour. By identifying opportunities to match western Canadian capabilities with North Asian requirements, the tour will enhance the western business community's participation and success in Asian markets and build a stronger future for western Canadians in the global marketplace. Aw

## HELPING SASKATCHEWAN BUSINESSES STEP INTO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPRESENTS an important growth opportunity for businesses of all sizes. But, for smaller businesses, accessing foreign markets can be a daunting and expensive proposition.

In 2005, the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP) – an industry-led organization established by the Province of Saskatchewan – introduced a novel program to make it easier and more affordable for exporters and trade development organizations to do business with foreign distributors, importers and agents.

The Western Canada Incoming Buyers
Program, which concluded in September
2007, attracted qualified international
buyers by providing partial reimbursement
of travel and language interpretation costs
– allowing western Canadian companies
to conduct international business without
having to leave the country. In return,
foreign buyers received exposure to
industries with high export potential.

"The Incoming Buyers Program provided exporters with a strategic marketing tool to improve their success," says Lionel LaBelle, President and CEO for STEP. "The results suggest it was a very effective approach to increasing engagement in the international marketplace."

The program, which received \$187,000 from WD, attracted incoming buyers from 23 different countries, with the top three markets being the United States, Australia and Russia. In all, 95 companies confirmed business with new suppliers.

Participating western Canadian firms reported new exports of \$27.6 million and repeat exports of \$217.8 million.

Saskatchewan-based exporters accounted for nearly 50 per cent of those totals.

Recent numbers from Statistics Canada show that Saskatchewan is leading the nation in export growth, with a 36.3 per cent increase in exports from March 2007 to March 2008.AW



St. Joseph Museum is a reconstructed pioneer village featuring 16 restored buildings and over 20 vintage tractors. The village offers visitors a unique opportunity to see firsthand how the early pioneer farmers lived and worked more than 100 years ago. Photo courtesy of CDEM.

## TOURISM INITIATIVES PROMOTE WESTERN CANADIAN DESTINATIONS

Provincial tourism councils to coordinate international marketing strategy

WHILE SINGING FROM THE SAME

songbook ensures unison, the magic of harmony comes from the strategic blending of many voices. Similarly, WD's recent \$5 million investment in a pan-west international marketing campaign will have all four provinces working together to promote Western Canada as a tourist destination. But the magic behind the four-part harmony will be each province's individual appeal.

The Tourism Alliance of Western Canada, a consortium of the provincial tourism councils – Tourism British Columbia, Travel Alberta, Tourism Saskatchewan and Travel Manitoba – will oversee a unified campaign designed to showcase the breadth of tourism opportunities across the West. The campaign will focus on key target markets across the United States, Europe and Asia.

The timing of this initiative also means the campaign can capitalize on increasing international attention as the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver draw

nearer. By creating international awareness of the "rest of the West" there is potential to build long-term benefits through extended or repeat visits.

In announcing the funding in May, WD Minister Rona Ambrose said the project will enhance international competitiveness by reinforcing collaboration among the West's tourism sector stakeholders. "With competition for the attention of travelers never stronger, these resources will mean each of the Alliance members can coordinate a series of activities tailored to its own needs and priorities within a unified message that Western Canada has something for everyone."

This is good news for the more than 200,000 small- and medium-sized businesses involved in tourism across the West, many of which are located in rural communities. By working together to promote the West as a single destination with endless possibilities, the campaign will contribute to economic prosperity in western communities of every size.

#### COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EN ACTION

WD also provided a recent investment of nearly \$800,000 to the Corridor touristique francophone de l'Ouest (CTFO), or Western Francophone Tourism Corridor, a pan-west alliance that promotes Western Canada as a destination for French-speaking tourists. The new funding will be used to expand their reach in national and international markets.

Since 2003, the organization has worked to increase awareness of Western Canada's many Francophone communities as a tourism destination for Ouebecers.

Quebec responded. Recently CTFO concluded two successful marketing initiatives, including media tours of the four western provinces and the production and distribution of promotional brochures which were used in several tourism trade shows. The result has been more than 9,000 requests for information and an estimated economic spin-off of almost \$4 million from an original investment of about \$1 million.

Now they plan to build on that success by creating updated marketing tools, organizing promotional tours with national and international French media, and strengthening partnerships with and between industry stakeholders.

The partners of the CTFO are the provincial Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs) – la Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique, le Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, le Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan and le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba.

The four FEDOs, which became part of WD's Business Service Network in 2001, enhance the vitality of Western Canada's minority language communities and assist in their economic development – an objective that this initiative will contribute to AW



## PROMOTING THE PRAIRIES' TOURISM GEMS

Adding economic value





#### DUCK MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL

Park is like a glittering emerald, unexpectedly set in the midst of a vast band of gold. The most southerly piece of natural boreal forest in Saskatchewan, the park was created more than 10,000 years ago when glaciers stopped their southern progress and melted, depositing all the earth they had gathered. The result is a lush, rolling landscape of forest and lakes surrounded by fields of grain.

Located on the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border just three hours northeast of Regina, the park is just one of many relatively-unknown jewels located along the Assiniboine River. But they will not remain unknown for long.

Early this year, the Assiniboine Corridor Development Inc. (ACDI) received a total of \$105,000 in

combined federal and provincial funding to raise awareness of the region as a tourism destination. The investment, including \$90,000 from WD, will allow the ACDI to create an identifiable brand and marketing tools, in both official languages.

Early this year, the
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a tourism destination

Like its predecessor, the Red River Corridor in Manitoba, the ACDI emphasizes the added economic value that results from the development of destinations along the Assiniboine River that encourage visitors to stay for extended periods.

The corridor follows the scenic Assiniboine River and its tributaries from Vergin, Saskatchewan to St. Lazare, Manitoba – an area which includes 31 municipalities and First Nation communities.

By establishing the corridor as a year-round destination for recreational, tourism, economic and conservation activities, this initiative will translate into increased economic benefits, economic growth and stronger communities across the region.

### COMMUNITY FUTURES WINNIPEG RIVER LIVES UP TO ITS NAME

IN 1998, WHEN ATOMIC ENERGY OF Canada announced the decommissioning of Whiteshell Laboratories, the news was devastating. The research facility had been a fixture in Pinawa since 1963, and was the community's only industry employer.

Fortunately, Pinawa had an ace up its sleeve – Community Futures Winnipeg River (CF-WR), which recently celebrated 20 years of service to Manitoba's North Eastman region.

To help the community respond to the impending closure, CF-WR administered the Whiteshell Community Adjustment Fund on behalf of WD. In all, the fund invested \$3.75 million in 35 community economic development projects that have created new jobs and new opportunities across the region.

For example, in 2000, CF-WR helped the Pinawa Community Development Corporation prepare a business plan and secure funding to purchase and renovate a vacant school, creating much-needed commercial space for businesses.

The W.B. Lewis Business Centre – now fully occupied with 12 companies employing 62 people – has since grown to include the Pinawa Business Incubator for new or home-based businesses ready to move into commercial space. The incubator helps improve the success of fledgling businesses by providing hands-on training and mentoring, flexible leasing arrangements and graduated subsidized rental rates.

This year, CF-WR recognized the W.B. Lewis Centre's substantial economic impact by naming Stu Iverson Volunteer of the Year. Iverson, who was instrumental in the creation of the centre and continues to serve as its volunteer President and Manager, is just one of the CF's many dedicated volunteers who contributed almost 1,000 hours of time last year.

Other projects funded under the Whiteshell Community Adjustment Fund include the Winnipeg River Learning Centre – recipient of this year's Community Initiative Award – which will offer post-secondary

education and trades training in Powerview-Pine Falls, and the Pinawa Business Park, which will further expand the availability of commercial space.

CF-WR has also helped to enhance residents' strong entrepreneurial streak by providing services for small business, including market research, financial forecasting and analysis, business planning, counselling and training. To date, the CF has provided 214 loans, worth \$6.5 million, to entrepreneurs that have created or maintained more than 600 jobs in the region.

"It's very challenging work, but also very rewarding. Wherever I go, throughout the region, I can see thriving businesses and projects we've helped make possible," says Jenny Peterson, an Economic Development Officer who has been with Winnipeg River CF for nine years. "It's great to know you're helping to build a brighter future for your community. AW



Award recipients smile for the camera during the Community Futures Winnipeg River (CFWR) – Annual General Meeting and Awards Banquet on May 26, 2008 in Powerview-Pine Falls, Manitoba. Outstanding residents of the North Eastman region were recognized in several award categories for successfully developing their businesses; using innovation, judgement, and skill to overcome obstacles during their first year of business; advancing a project that contributed to regional economic development; and for making outstanding volunteer contributions to economic development efforts in their community.

Winners of this year's awards and CFWR representatives are (left to right) Doug Thomasson (Vice-Chair, CFWR); Tonya Kemball (Youth Entrepreneur Award); Steven Penner (Self-Employment Award); Katherine MacFarlane (Self-Employment Award); Garry Enns and Bev Dubé (Community Initiative Award); Lucia Ross-Dola and Jaret Dola (Business of the Year Award); Mary Greber (front row) (Executive Director, CFWR); Stu Iverson (Volunteer of the Year Award); and Teresa Gmiterek (Chairperson, CFWR).



JudyLynn Archer, Terri Polowick, Melissa O'Flaherty, Sondra Austin, Minister Rona Ambrose, Wanda Wetterberg and Peggy Roberts, at the WD funding announcement for Women Building Futures in March 2008

#### TRADING UP

DARLENE JONES ALWAYS WANTED a career in the trades. She fell in love with welding during her teen years, but after high school she didn't know how to go about making it her career.

A couple of decades, five children and a series of low-paying jobs later, a family counselor put Jones back in touch with her first love, suggesting she talk to Women Building Futures (WBF), an Edmonton program that helps low-income women kick-start careers in the trades. She attended an orientation session and hasn't looked back since.

"I love everything about it. You're learning something new every day ... and the money's a lot better too," said Jones, who graduated from the program in late 2005. "Getting into welding has completely changed my life."

The WBF program supports women who want careers in trades such as welding, pipefitting, plumbing and carpentry. "Skills training is just one piece of the program," said JudyLynn Archer. Chief Executive Officer of the program. "We also teach our students financial planning, problem resolution strategies and how to thrive in what can

be a challenging sector. By the time students finish the 16-week program, they're ready to succeed both in their careers and their lives."

WD invested almost \$2.5 million to help convert an existing warehouse into a new, larger training facility. The centre, which opened in May 2008, enables the program to increase its training capacity to 400 from 60 students a year. About 20 per cent of the women are Aboriginal, and half are single mothers.

#### CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE.

"To get out of poverty, these women need careers, not just jobs," said Archer. "That's why we work with employers to make sure the women are hired as apprentices on day one."

Companies such as Western Truck Body, which designs and manufactures specialized truck bodies for customers across North America, have found the program an invaluable source of qualified candidates.

Western hired its first graduate about five years ago. There are now six WBF graduates working on their floor and they

would hire more "without hesitation."

"WBF is a secret I don't really want to give out to the competition. Their graduates already know the basics about tools, work safety and the shop environment," says Shop Foreman, Rick Weber. "They come in well-prepared and ready to work."

The program has a solid reputation among employers because it provides high-quality training to carefully screened candidates.

"Employers know what they're getting when they hire WBF graduates," said Archer. "They're getting tradeswomen who understand their jobs and do them well."

Darlene Jones, one of more than 300 women who have graduated from the Women Building Futures Training Centre to date, is enjoying her new career at Western Truck Body, where she works as an apprentice welder. Her advice to women interested in the trades? "Go for it. You'll wonder why you didn't do it years ago."

For more information on Women Building Futures, visit: www.womenbuildingfutures.com.

#### INNOVATION ENGINE

IMPROVING MANUFACTURING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH LEARNING AND INNOVATION

#### IN ALBERTA, MANUFACTURING EMPLOYS

approximately 150,000 people and accounts for about 10 per cent of economic activity. But, with the current labour environment, there is an urgent need for the industry to reduce operational costs and improve productivity.

NAIT (formerly the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) is determined to be part of the solution. In September 2007, they launched the NAIT Shell Manufacturing Centre, a unique facility dedicated to enhancing competitiveness in the manufacturing industry.

The Shell Centre doesn't just train apprentices, it also trains their bosses. NAIT's Productivity Enhancement Services provide specialized training in business leadership and management that more than 50 organizations – including Biomira Inc., Weyerhaeuser Canada, the University of Alberta and IBM – have taken advantage of to date.

What makes the centre truly unique, though, is the research and development services available for manufacturers. By offering lab facilities and specialized support to help companies develop and test new technologies,

the centre's Manufacturing Solutions help companies become more innovative by facilitating applied research projects in product design, prototype development and materials evaluation.

"Industries who are currently using older technology, and especially labour-intensive technology in Alberta, can gain an awareness and a familiarity with some newer capabilities that will allow them to increase their efficiency," says J.P. Tetreau, the centre's manufacturing solutions coordinator.

Located at NAIT's main campus in Edmonton, the centre includes nine specialized labs, focusing on areas that include computer integrated manufacturing, advanced hydraulics and pneumatics, advanced computer applications, and manufacturing operations such as rapid prototyping, robotic welding and 3-D laser cutting.

The Shell Centre, which received \$3.15 million from WD, is the first facility in Canada to combine these services under one roof. By creating a one-stop shop for manufacturing excellence, NAIT is improving the global competitiveness of Alberta's manufacturing sector.AW



Above from left: Brian Straub, Executive Vice President Oil Sands, Shell Canada; Minister Rona Ambrose; and Dr. Sam Shaw, NAIT President and CEO cutting the grand opening ribbon in front of the Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) Systems Lab in the NAIT Shell Manufacturing Centre





# HELPING ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES SUCCEED

COMMUNITY FUTURES BRITISH COLUMBIA received some well-deserved praise for its Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP) in January.

Newspapers from coast to coast — including the National Post, Vancouver Sun, Montreal Gazette, Ottawa Citizen and St. John's Telegram — ran articles profiling several clients who have overcome adversity to start their own successful businesses with help from the EDP.

Deanna Bhandar, provincial coordinator for the B.C. EDP is quoted as saying, "What we see in entrepreneurs is someone who's incredibly motivated and has a lot of perseverance. Often that's the same characteristic as people with disabilities. They're on fixed incomes (and) they're looking for ways to contribute to their local economies and communities."

The program helps western Canadians with disabilities become self-employed by providing access to business information, training and development, mentoring, one-on-one counselling and financing.

In rural communities across the West the program is offered through 90 Community Futures organizations, as members of WD's Business Service Network. In urban areas, WD works with a number of partners to deliver the EDP.

Last year, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program approved 69 loans totalling \$2.3 million. These loans leveraged an additional \$3.4 million and were estimated to create or maintain more than 360 jobs. AW

For more information on the EDP, visit wd.gc.ca/273\_eng\_asp.asp.



left to right: Marvin Hunt, Councillor, City of Surrey, Doug Blakeway, G4S Justice Service Canada, SFU-Surrey Advisory Board, Bill Krane, Associate Vice-President Academic, SFU, Colleen Collins, Associate Dean, Faculty of Business Administration, Nina Grewal, MP, Fleetwood-Port Kells, Justine Bizzocchi, Technology Manager, SFU University-Industry Liaison Office, Joanne Curry, Executive Director, SFU-Surrey Campus, Gavin Norquay, BBA Candidate; President, ACE/SIFE Student Business Club

### SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY CREATES NEW "SPIN" ON LEARNING

IT HAS BEEN SAID ENTREPRENEURS ARE BORN, NOT MADE, BUT experts at Simon Fraser University (SFU) will tell you a little coaching never hurts.

SFU has a record as one of the top North American universities in launching spin-off companies – about 70 since 1985. Two years ago, their University Industry Liaison Office (UILO) pitched the idea of a Student Business Incubator Program on SFU's campus in Surrey. UILO was then instrumental in helping secure the government and private funding necessary to launch the initiative this May.

### "...by 2010, some 200 students will have spun off 10 companies through the incubator"

Beginning in 2008-09, the business incubator will pull together all parts of the SFU entrepreneurial stream, providing students with both the training and the tools they need to successfully launch their own companies.

"We hope that by 2010, some 200 students will have spun-off 10 companies through the incubator," says Terry Lavender, Communications Manager for SFU Surrey Campus.

With more than \$400,000 in funding from WD, the student business incubator will provide an innovative, practical approach to cultivating budding entrepreneurs, centralizing access to industry mentors, small business consultants and entrepreneurship training. It will also offer capital options for seed funding and make office space available on campus.

"Surrey is a city for the future, and SFU's Surrey campus is an ideal location for this innovative program which crosses academic disciplines," said Joanne Curry, Executive Director of SFU Surrey. "This program and the support of the local business and financial community will help us to nurture knowledge-based new ventures for the benefit of the B.C. economy." AW

### RESEARCH REPORT CAPTURES STATE OF THE WEST

Final NEXT West project publication released

A MAJOR NEW RESEARCH REPORT, released by the Canada West Foundation (CWF) in March, provides important insights that make it a valuable reference for anyone with an interest in the future of Western Canada.

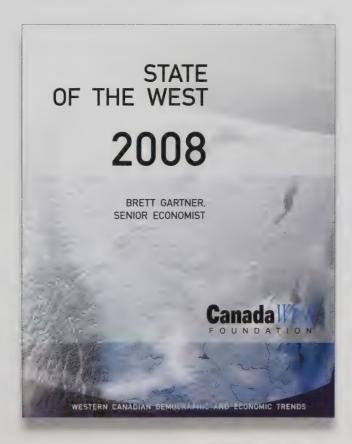
State of the West 2008 is the final publication to emerge from the CWF's NEXT West project, a three-year research, consultation and communication initiative that engaged western Canadians in determining how public policy can promote economic prosperity and quality of life over the long term.

The project, which was supported by WD, examined the economic,

generational and community transformations taking place in Western Canada.

State of the West 2008 captures Western Canada as it is today, and defines the trends that will shape the region in the years ahead. Not only does it identify the factors that unite the West, it also describes where the provinces diverge, requiring different strategies to achieve economic prosperity and quality of life over the long term. AW

To view the report, visit www.wd.gc.ca/56\_ENG\_ASP.asp.



Creating S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

#### BUILDING TOMORROW'S WORKPLACE

THE UNITED CHINESE COMMUNITY ENRIChment Services Society (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.) is introducing an innovative new program to increase employment and business productivity in Surrey B.C., one of Canada's most multicultural cities.

Through the Tomorrow's Workplace program, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. will work closely with city businesses and industry associations to identify employment opportunities for immigrants and visible minorities. By conducting research and developing methods and practices for local industry, it will also increase businesses' success in recruiting, training and retaining employees to create a more stable and effective workplace

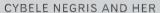
"Tomorrow's Workplace is a unique community-based economic development initiative that marshals all the community's resources to respond to workplace issues," said Bill Beatty, Project Director. "Our communities and our world have changed, but there has been no corresponding change in how business does business. This initiative will create a more efficient workplace by helping businesses respond to – and benefit from – the realities of a multicultural workforce."

The initiative received \$120,000 from WD in May 2008. The Surrey Board of Trade, Simon Fraser University's Surrey campus and Kwantlen University are working closely with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. to develop the initiative.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is one of the largest immigration and social service agencies in British Columbia. Last year, they provided nearly 250,000 services, including social, educational and health services, business and community development, and advocacy. AW

# FORUM FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS EXPANDS SUCCESS OF B.C. BUSINESSES

E-series trains women looking to take their young, high-growth businesses to the next level



committee have a difficult task ahead of them. From about 200 applicants, they must choose just 15 to participate in the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE) e-series program beginning in January 2009.

It's not a decision Negris will make lightly. Not only is this successful entrepreneur a member of the FWE Board, she was also one of the first women to graduate from the program in 2003.

E-series provides training sessions for women looking to take their young, high-growth businesses to the next level. Each year, a small number of women are selected to participate in the program, which offers weekly sessions taught by business leaders and industry experts on topics such as marketing, sales, financing, legal issues, pitching for investors, cross border issues, public relations and human resources.

"It's a huge commitment of time, but the knowledge and the networking made a huge difference to me and my business," says Negris.

Negris is a partner in webnames.ca, the original Canadian domain registrar. The company hosts thousands of websites and manages domain portfolios for many of Canada's Fortune 500, including Air Canada, CanWest Global and Pharmasave.

Such accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. Negris has earned a spot in PROFIT magazine's Canada's Top Women Entrepreneurs every year since 2004.

Many other women have benefitted as well. Michelle Kelsey of Vancouver knew her business, Nannies On Call, was on track to expand but it took a bit of networking with other women entrepreneurs to give her the confidence to really kick-start the process.

On the advice of a friend, Kelsey registered for e-series and, within a year of her graduation in 2006, she had bought out a competitor in Whistler. Since then, she has also opened an office in Calgary, and her staff has tripled from three to nine.

#### "The knowledge and the networking made a huge difference to me and my business"

In addition to e-series, FWE sponsors a mentorship program, hosts twice-yearly roundtables on specific topics and offers one-year student internships for up to five young women entrepreneurs. Last fall WD invested \$100,000 to help FWE continue delivering its programs for the next two years.

Executive Director Jill Earthy says that, over the years, FWE members have founded more than 500 companies, created hundreds of jobs and built a growing business community of women entrepreneurs, corporate executives, professional advisors and investors.

"Partnering with WD enables us to provide additional resources and even more value to our members," she says. AW





From left: Susan Jones, Fourth-year machinist apprentice; Minister Rona Ambrose; the Honourable Doug Horner, Alberta Minister of Advanced Education and Technology; Pernilla Eriksson, Senior Manager, Marketing Communication, Sandvik Coromant; Dr. Sam Shaw, President and CEO of NAIT; and Stewart Cook, Chair NAIT Machinist program in the Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machine Lab.

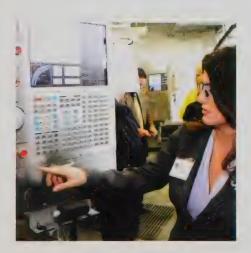
#### NAIT EXPANDS TRADES TRAINING CAPACITY

WHEN IT COMES TO MEETING THE growing demand for labour that comes with a strong economy, Western Canada has a valuable ally.

NAIT (formerly the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) – the Edmonton-based training powerhouse that already trains more than half of Alberta's, and roughly 17 per cent of Canada's, trades people – is undertaking an aggressive ten-year plan to take its impressive results to the next level.

Their rolling Workforce Development Plan, expected to cost \$1.5 billion, will create a world-class technical institute that will accommodate a 25 per cent increase in capacity – from the current level of 86,500 students to an estimated total of 108,000 students.

To raise the money for the muchneeded expansion, NAIT is working in collaboration with its industry and government partners, including WD.



#### PARTNESHIPS THE KEY TO TRAINING TOMORROW'S SKILLED WORKFORGE

Such partnerships are the core of win/ win solutions says WD Minister Rona Ambrose. "NAIT's approach is a great example of what can be accomplished when industry, post-secondary institutions and different orders of government work together to improve our economic competitiveness and the technology skills of our workforce."

Much of the expansion activity is focused on the NAIT Centres for Apprenticeship Technologies, a series of facilities that train apprentices in some of the country's fastest-growing occupations. NAIT is serving close to 16,000 apprentices in 2007-08, up from almost 13,000 the previous year.

In March, WD announced a \$1.8 million contribution to purchase equipment for labs located within the NAIT Sandvik Coromant Centre for Machinist Technology. The \$10 million centre boasts five labs, including a Computer Numerical Control Machinist Lab, individual Machinist Labs for each of the four years of apprenticeship and a Metrology Lab, making it the best-equipped machinist training facility in the country. The new centre, which opened in January 2008, increases training capacity by 50 per cent, to 660 students a year.

Minister Ambrose starting one of the vertical machining centers in the NAIT Sandvik Coromant Centre for Machinist Technology.

WD also invested \$3.8 million in the NAIT Spartan Centre for Instrumentation Technology, which opened in September 2007. With 11 instrumentation labs, \$6.5 million worth of new equipment, an 80-seat lecture theater with state-of-the-art videoconferencing technology and 11 smart classrooms, the Spartan Centre increases capacity by 61 per cent. The hands-on training provided at the centre ensures that students learn to work safely and efficiently in industries that are increasingly automated and require advanced problem-solving skills.

A third facility, the NAIT Petro-Canada Centre for Millwright Technology, has received more than \$640,000 from WD. Seven state-of-the-art labs, six smart classrooms and \$16 million worth of new equipment provide competency-based training on a scale unsurpassed anywhere in the world, according to Millwright Program Chair, Vern Gorman. The centre is now able to accommodate 700 students, a 25 per cent increase.

WD's investments in NAIT – more than \$9.8 million in total since 2006 – are an important means of achieving our goal of improved business competitiveness and increased productivity. By creating a new generation of skilled workers, armed with the knowledge of leading-edge technologies and applications, NAIT is creating a competitive edge for Western Canada in the global market. Aw

#### RETROSPECTIVE





Canadian Publication Mail Agreement no. 40063159

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### ADDING VALUE HELPS WOOD PRODUCTS COMPANY THRIVE

WHEN RICHARD WILSON AND HIS PARTNERS BOUGHT CRAFTSMAN WOOD PRODUCTS in 1992, the company had 15 employees and was a solid supplier of cut-to-size panels for plywood and particleboard producers. But Wilson had a bigger plan and, later that year, he approached WD for help in expanding the company.

With financing in place, Craftsman was able to purchase new equipment so the company could create additional value by handling laminated material jobs and custom cutting for furniture manufacturing.

"The loan sped up our ability to maximize the opportunities we saw in the marketplace," says Wilson. "We probably wouldn't have been able to do it without WD's help."

Today, Craftsman employs 75 people – a five-fold increase – and precision-cuts more than \$30 million in custom components for cabinets, furniture and other uses from their 100,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Delta, B.C.

For example, much of the display furniture in Safeway stores across North America is made by Craftsman. The company is also one of North America's largest manufacturers of closet components, producing more than 300,000 parts – such as melamine partitions, shelves, drawers and base cabinets – for companies such as Closetmaid and California Closets each year.

It hasn't been easy. The last few years have been difficult ones in the forestry industry, with the challenges of a higher Canadian dollar, a slowdown in the U.S. housing market, the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation and chronic labour shortages.

WD's Western Canada Business Service Network provides more than 100 points of service in communities across the West where entrepreneurs can get assistance in starting and growing their businesses.

That's why Craftsman sought another competitive edge in 2005, becoming the first components supplier to be certified through the Wood Quality Certification Program. The Woodmark program, which recently received funding from WD (see story page 6), helps companies apply formalized quality assurance practices to ensure product consistency and improve business performance.

Craftsman joins an elite group of manufacturers that are committed to improving manufacturing competitiveness through quality control and continuous improvement. With Woodmark certification, Craftsman's customers can be confident the components they purchase will consistently meet the highest quality standards in the industry.

"Focusing on quality and applying a standard approach to improvements resulted in significant gains for us," says Wilson, noting that the certification contributed to a major U.S. home improvement vendor selecting Craftsman as a supplier of choice. "We've always produced good quality, but it depended on who showed up for work. Now it depends on the system working." AW

For more information, visit wd.gc.ca/99\_ENG\_ASP.asp.

# WEST

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Federal-provincial agreements to invest \$200 million in western economy

Infrastructure spending to strengthen communities and stimulate the economy

New centre to bring nanotechnology products to world markets



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Disponible aussi en français ISSN: 1495-6802 (print) ISSN: 1495-6543 (online)

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# MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE LYNNE YELICH

MY FIRST FEW MONTHS AS MINISTER

of State for Western Economic

Diversification (WD) have deepened

my understanding of the West and

increased my pride in the strength of

western Canadians.

I have seen, first hand, how western ingenuity and determination are transforming the economic landscape in every corner of the region. Anyone who believes the western Canadian economy is still limited to grain fields, oil wells and forests is seriously underestimating the depth and breadth of economic activity taking place across the West today.

From adding value in traditional industries to creating entirely new industries founded on technological breakthroughs, western Canadians are building an innovative and resilient economy that will serve the region well through this period of global economic turmoil. And WD is right there, working with westerners to support and enhance the region's growing strengths.

We are excited to share with you, in this issue of Access West, how WD is achieving its vision to be leaders in creating a more diversified western Canadian economy that has strong, competitive and innovative businesses and communities. Whether it's skills training in Manitoba, northern development in Saskatchewan, innovation in Alberta or rural diversification in British Columbia, Western Economic Diversification Canada is contributing to initiatives that are building a stronger economic future for the West, and for western Canadians.



The Honourable Lynne Yelich Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification





### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS TO INVEST \$200 MILLION IN WESTERN ECONOMY

The government is working to secure the country's long-term growth and prosperity

IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES, WHEN CANADA IS THREATENED BY A STRUGGLING world economy, it is essential that governments work together to secure the country's long-term growth and prosperity.

Early in 2009, the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, met with her provincial counterparts to sign a new series of Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPAs). The four-year agreements will allocate \$25 million in funding for each of the western provinces, matched by the provincial governments for a total investment of \$200 million in the western Canadian economy.

"Western Economic Partnership Agreements are a win-win and will stimulate the economy in Western Canada, which is essential to increasing the competitiveness of the West," said Minister of State Yelich at the signing ceremony in Saskatchewan. "Today's investment will help Canada meet the challenges of today and build a dynamic western Canadian economy that will create opportunities for families and communities."

WEPAs are multi-year federal-provincial funding commitments to strengthen economic activity and improve quality of life in western Canadian communities. By combining government resources, the agreements allow significant investments to be made in support of projects that contribute to the achievement of federal and provincial priorities, creating new opportunities and better jobs for Canadians, today and in the future.

The agreements support numerous initiat ves that grow and diversify the western economy at a time when families and communities are facing serious challenges and uncertainty due to the global economic: slowdown.

The renewed agreements demonstrate WID's ongoing commitment to work with the western provincial governments to help families and communities bridge the gap between downturn and recovery, foster innovation and build a stronger economy. AW

### Priorities for the WEPA agreements signed in 2009 include:

- Supporting the creation and growth of research and development, with a focus on getting new products, technologies and services out to market;
- Supporting trade and investment;
- Enhancing business productivity and competitiveness; and
- Increasing Value-added production in traditional industries.

Minister Yelich and Minister Stewart shake hands after signature of agreements. (Directly behind Minister Yelich is University of Saskatchewan Vice President of Finance and Resources, Dr. Richard Florizone and MP Robert Clarke)



Minister Yelich speaking at the official signing of the Western Economic Partnership Agreement in Manifeba





# FORUM FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS EXPANDS SUCCESS OF B.C. BUSINESSES

E-series trains women looking to take their young, high-growth businesses to the next level

CYBELE NEGRIS AND HER COMMITTEE had the incredibly difficult task of choosing just 15 out of 200 applicants to participate in the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE) e-series program that began in January 2009.

It's not a decision Negris would make lightly. Not only is this successful entrepreneur a member of the FWE Board, she was also one of the first women to graduate from the program in 2003.

E-series provides training sessions for women looking to take their young, high-growth businesses to the next level. Each year, a small number of women are selected to participate in the program, which offers weekly sessions taught by business leaders and industry experts on topics such as marketing, sales, financing, legal issues, pitching for investors, cross border issues, public relations and human resources.

"It's a huge commitment of time, but the knowledge and the networking made a huge difference to me and my business," says Negris.

Negris is a partner in webnames.ca, the original Canadian domain registrar. The company hosts thousands of websites and manages domain portfolios for many of Canada's Fortune 500, including Air Canada, CanWest Global and Pharmasave.

Such accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. Negris has earned a spot in PROFIT magazine's Canada's Top Women Entrepreneurs every year since 2004.

Many other women have benefitted as well. Michelle Kelsey of Vancouver knew her business, Nannies On Call, was on track to expand but it took a bit of networking with other women entrepreneurs to give her the confidence to really kick-start the process.

On the advice of a friend, Kelsey registered for e-series and, within a year of her graduation in 2006, she had bought out a competitor in Whistler. Since then, she has also opened an office in Calgary, and her staff has tripled from three to nine.

In addition to e-series, FWE sponsors a mentorship program, hosts twice-yearly roundtables on specific topics and offers one-year student internships for up to five young women entrepreneurs. In late 2007, WD invested \$100,000 to help FWE continue delivering its programs for the next two years.

Executive Director Jill Earthy says that, over the years, FWE members have founded more than 500 companies, created hundreds of jobs and built a growing business community of women entrepreneurs, corporate executives, professional advisors and investors.

"Partnering with WD enables us to provide additional resources and even more value to our members," she says. Aw

### CONNECTING B.C.'S RURAL ENTREPRENEURS

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS IN WESTERN Canada's rural communities often have difficulty getting the support needed to succeed. While a wealth of seminars, conferences and other resources are available in major centres, entrepreneurs from smaller communities need to travel in order to access these opportunities.

A new videoconferencing network, completed in October 2008, is making it easier for British Columbia's rural residents to get the assistance they need to start or grow their small businesses. Coordinated by Community Futures British Columbia, the network includes all 35 B.C. Community Futures locations and the Women's Enterprise Centre, located in Kelowna.

The network allows users to participate in seminars, obtain advice and receive business information through real-time, interactive videoconferences hosted by their local office. Not only does the network improve access to training and business development, it also saves time and money, because participants don't have to leave their home communities.

"The benefits of videoconferencing were seen immediately," said Richard Joyce, Chair of Community Futures British Columbia. "In the first quarter of operations 51 training events were delivered via videoconferencing to more than 250 people. The system was also used by four small businesses to conduct job interviews and CF members benefited from the interactive dissemination of information from government leaders and policy makers."

To subsidize the operational costs of the network, Community Futures makes unused videoconferencing time slots available for a fee to other agencies and service groups.

WD has invested nearly \$1.1 million to establish videoconferencing networks in each of the four western provinces. The original 83 sites funded by WD have since increased to more than 150 locations in communities across the West. The expanding network is believed to be the largest such network in North America. AW

#### Need access to videoconferencing facilitites?

Small agencies and service groups that need access to videoconferencing facilities can book time for a nomial fee through Community Futures British Columbia. In October 2008 Community Futures British Columbia's new videonferencing network became operational. To subsidize its operational costs, Community Futures makes unused videoconferencing time slots available for a fee to other agencies and service groups. For more information, please contact your local community futures organization at:

http://www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/





# MANITOBA FILM INDUSTRY SHINES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MANITOBA'S FILM INDUSTRY IS ROLLING. A MADE-IN-MANITOBA TELEVISION movie, *The Capture of the Green River Killer*, was named one of the top TV shows of 2008 by Variety, the entertainment industry's leading news source. And *My Winnipeg* not only made a Time.com list of 2008's top 10 movies, it also won the Rogers Best Canadian Film Award from the Toronto Film Critics Association.

Those achievements are just the latest for the province's film industry, which has experienced solid growth over the past decade. Since 1997, film and television production has increased by nearly 250 per cent in Manitoba. Last year, the value of Manitoba productions rose to \$122 million, more than 50 per cent higher than the previous year.

According to Neila Benson, Executive Director of Film Training Manitoba, one reason for the industry's growth is the depth of talent found in the province. "The availability of creative and technical skills not only provides an essential foundation for high-quality local productions, they're also a major drawing-card that attracts foreign productions to Manitoba."

"The availability of creative and technical skills not only provides an essential foundation for high-quality local productions, they're also a major drawing-card that attracts foreign productions to Manitoba."

- Neila Benson, Executive Director of Film Training Manitoba

Film Training Manitoba (FTM) helps upgrade the skills of people already working in the industry, as well as offering entry-level training for those just starting out. Working closely with the film industry, FTM identifies the areas of greatest need, and offers practical, skill-based training to address labour gaps. The organization also partners with local production companies to offer on-the-job experience on film sets, and in production offices and other active film environments.

With a primary focus on the people who work behind the scenes, film crews offer a vast range of opportunities, including assistant directors, camera operators, grips, props, electrics, locations and costume design.

Like most industries, film is changing rapidly, making it essential that crew members keep abreast of new technologies. A \$108,000 investment from WD in 2008 enabled FTM to purchase advanced high definition (HD) equipment – including cameras and projectors, multi-media/computer equipment and lighting – that will allow them to offer training in digital film production.

Benson says, "The rapid evolution of technology in film-making is creating new positions on set and changing aspects of existing positions, such as lighting and camera positions. By making it possible for FTM to train the province's crew members in new technologies, WD's investment will ensure Manitoba's film industry continues to grow and succeed." AW



The made for TV movie "The Capture of the Green River Killer" was made in Manitoba and listed by Variety as one of the top TV shows of 2008.

The cast of the Canadian hit TV series "Falcon Beach" which is filmed in Manitoba. Photo Credit: Rebecca Sandulak



#### Film training now available on-line

WD's investment in Film Training Manitoba (FTM) is helping to expand training opportunities across the province. An upgraded website has enabled FTM to venture into distance learning. In August it launched six on-line programs that provide rural and northern Manitobans with access to film training 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without having to leave home.

# HELPING SASKATCHEWAN BUSINESSES STEP INTO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPRESENTS an important growth opportunity for businesses of all sizes, but accessing foreign markets can be a difficult. Recent data from Statistics Canada show that Saskatchewan is leading the nation in export growth, with a 36.3 per cent increase in exports from March 2007 to March 2008.

Some of that success can be attributed to the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP) – an industry-led organization established by the Province of Saskatchewan that introduced a program that makes it easier and more affordable for exporters and trade development organizations to do business with foreign distributors, importers and agents.

The program, which received \$187,000 from WD, attracted incoming buyers from 23 different countries, with the top three markets being the United States, Australia and Russia. In all, 95 companies confirmed business with new suppliers.

Participating western Canadian firms reported new exports of \$27.6 million and repeat exports of \$217.8 million. Saskatchewan-based exporters accounted for nearly 50 per cent of those totals.

The Western Canada Incoming Buyers Program, which concluded in September 2007, attracted qualified international buyers by providing partial reimbursement of travel and language interpretation costs — enabling western Canadian companies to conduct international business without having to leave the country. In return, foreign buyers received exposure to industries with high export potential. AW

## NEW VENTURE CAPITAL FUND FOR WESTERNERS

ACCESS TO CAPITAL IS FREQUENTLY an obstacle for early-stage companies trying to develop and commercialize innovative new products or services. Now, a major new venture capital fund is providing western companies with the investments they need to grow and succeed.

iNovia Capital Inc., one of the few major private venture fund managers operating in Alberta, recently iNovia began actively reviewing western Canadian opportunities in 2008 and, early this year, announced its first equity investment – Calgary-based information and communications technology firm, Tynt Multimedia. Tynt is an innovative early-stage company that has developed a custom web browser plug-in communications platform.

The company has entered into a series of strategic relationships with key

"With this investment, Western Economic Diversification Canada is directly supporting Western Canada's emerging entrepreneurs and is helping ensure that our brightest minds are put to work building our future economy rather than drained to more established markets."

- Shawn Abbott, Partner at iNovia Capital

raised \$107 million for a new fund that will help entrepreneurs and innovators build successful companies in the information technology, life sciences and cleantech sectors. With a \$5 million contribution from WD's Loan and Investment Program, the fund will invest at least \$25 million in western Canadian innovations.

"Access to seed capital and strategic networking are essential ingredients for the development of successful technology based companies," said Shawn Abbott, Partner at iNovia Capital.
"With this investment, Western Economic Diversification Canada is directly supporting Western Canada's emerging entrepreneurs and is helping ensure that our brightest minds are put to work building our future economy rather than drained to more established markets."

Alberta technology commercialization partners – including TEC Edmonton, Calgary Technologies Inc. and the Alberta Research Council – that collectively undertake nearly a billion dollars of research and development activity each year. These relationships provide deep industry knowledge and insight, and will enable the fund to identify technologies with a high potential in the marketplace.

iNovia anticipates making numerous investments under the program throughout 2009. The fund typically provides an initial investment between \$500,000 and \$2 million, and up to \$7 million over the life of a company. AW

#### INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES AND STIMULATE THE ECONOMY

CANADA'S STRENGTHS ARE A FUNCTION OF THE STRENGTHS OF ITS COMMUNITIES and, in an increasingly globalized and competitive world, modern infrastructure is crucial to building healthy Canadian communities and a strong Canadian economy.

Strategic infrastructure investments provide communities with reliable roads; safe drinking water; improved community facilities; and strengthen the economy by facilitating the efficient transportation of goods and services, and enhancing business and trade opportunities.

The Government of Canada's \$33 billion Building Canada Fund represents our ongoing commitment to addressing the long-term infrastructure needs of Canadian communities and stimulating the Canadian economy.

In fact, with the continued volatility of economies across the world, the Government of Canada, in Budget 2009, announced that it is accelerating and expanding infrastructure investments by \$12 billion over the next two years.

The additional investment will enable communities to upgrade infrastructure and provide timely economic stimulus by creating construction, engineering and manufacturing jobs across Canada, and generating significant economic spinoff activity. The investments will also help Canada emerge from this economic crisis with a more modern and greener infrastructure that is the foundation of long-term economic growth.

Budget 2009 also identified the new Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RINC) program that will earmark \$500 million over two years to support construction of new community recreational facilities and upgrades to existing facilities.

#### WD'S ROLE

The Building Canada Fund's Communities Component is being delivered by WD in the West and will see the federal and provincial governments each contribute \$359.5 million toward smaller-scale projects in communities with less than 100,000 residents. With municipal contributions, almost \$1.1 billion will be invested in essential improvements to local infrastructure.

In fact, the shovels are already in the ground. In January and Febuary 2009, WD announced more than \$281 million in federal-provincial investments towards 109 municipal infrastructre projects in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan through Building Canada Fund - Communities Component (BCF-CC).

Future projects under BCF-CC will be announced in the coming months as they are approved.  $_{\mbox{\scriptsize AW}}$ 

#### **Building Strong Communities**

The Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), the forerunner to the Building Canada Fund, committed \$829 million towards 593 projects in Western Canada. Through the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, WD funded projects that:

- improved roads, water and wastewater infrastructure.
- · invested in recreational, tourism and cultural facilities, and
- · increased broadband connectivity in communities across the West.

Moreover, 80 per cent of MRIF funding was dedicated to rural communities with a population of 250,000 and a minimum of 55 per cent of projects target "green infrastructure."

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO CANADA'S PEACE OFFICERS

WHEN FOUR YOUNG MOUNTIES were killed in an ambush near Mayerthorpe in March 2005, the community was determined to build a positive legacy from the largest single-day loss in the RCMP's 136-year history.

The town created Fallen Four Memorial Park, a permanent monument honouring all Canadian peace officers who have lost their lives keeping our communities safe. Featuring life size bronze statues positioned at the four points of a compass, the park symbolizes the RCMP's presence in all parts of Canada.

The park also includes a Visitor Information Centre, with a gift shop, tourist information and public meeting room. A small museum houses the thousands of cards, letters and other expressions of condolence that were sent to the local RCMP detachment and the community after the tragedy.

The Visitor Information Centre at Fallen Four Memorial Park is one of more than 590 western Canadian projects that received funding from the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund. AW



Opening ceremonies at the Mayerthorpe Fallen Four Memorial Park, July 4, 2008.

#### RECYCLING TO BUILD AFFORDABLE HOMES

SASKATOON'S HABITAT FOR HUMANITY RESTORE HAS A NEW HOME IN RIVERSDALE.

IN MARCH 2008, WD INVESTED \$940,000 for Saskatoon's Habitat for Humanity ReStore to renovate a former curling rink, creating a larger retail facility for one of the city's largest recycling organizations.

The new facility, which opened in fall 2008, has triple the amount of storage and administration space as the original facility and is expected to increase sales of recycled building materials.

Habitat ReStore accepts donations of recovered and surplus building materials - such as doors, windows, lumber, cabinets, and plumbing and electrical fixtures - and sells them, providing homeowners with low cost building materials while diverting waste from Saskatoon's landfill.

Between 1996 and 2007, Habitat ReStore diverted an average of about 150 tonnes of waste from landfill each year, a number that is expected to grow to 700 tonnes a year with the new facility. It is projected that an additional 100 tonnes of waste will be diverted from the Saskatoon landfill this year alone.

Profits from the ReStore's operations are used to build affordable homes for low income working families. Since the Saskatoon chapter was established in 1991, the organization has built 37 homes; their 38th house is expected to be ready for tenants by April 2009. AW

First shopping day at the new Habitat for Humanity ReStore.



## CREATING LASTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN RURAL ALBERTA

ALBERTA'S COMMUNITY FUTURES (CF) ORGANIZATIONS HAVE A PROUD 20-year history of contributing to the economic strength of the province's rural com-

20-year history of contributing to the economic strength of the province's rural communities. With 27 offices across the province, CFs are resident in the communities they serve, giving them first-hand knowledge of unique local challenges and opportunities.

Announced in March 2008 as a three-year \$4.5 million program, the Rural Diversification Initiative (RDI) provides Alberta CFs with an important new tool to effect significant economic change. RDI is designed to create long-term economic growth by supporting major rural diversification projects that bring benefits to entire communities or industries.

RDI focuses on projects that result in significant economic development and diversification, such as adding value to traditional industries, developing new markets, enhancing industry productivity, and promoting new technologies, products and services.

The program is also designed to encourage regional collaboration. To qualify for funding, CFs must demonstrate that at least 40 per cent of a project's budget comes from other (non-RDI) sources. Eligible projects are identified by CF offices working with the local business and community partners. To date, the RDI program has approved more than \$816,000 in funding towards projects across Alberta.

CFs, funded by WD, are non-profit organizations guided by a volunteer board of directors and staffed with business professionals. Together, CF staff and community volunteers are actively engaged in helping to develop and implement community-based economic development and diversification strategies.

#### SUPPORTING SOUTH EAST ALBERTA'S TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

In September 2008, RDI invested more than \$150,000 towards the implementation of the South East Alberta Technology Strategy.

The goal is to implement a community developed strategy that will increase capacity and growth in the technology sector in South East Alberta. Led by Community Futures Entre-Corp, the Strategy brings technology-based businesses and Medicine Hat College together to address the growing demand for skilled workers and leverages business opportunities in the technology sector.

While implementation of this strategy has just begun, the early results are positive:

- Community Futures Entre-Corp has had the opportunity to provide on-to-one support to several technology clients;
- Medicine Hat College has established a Technology Co-op Program; and
- Community Futures Entre-Corp has been designated an approved service provider for the Alberta Advanced Education and Technology's Innovation Voucher Pilot Program. AW

## HELPING B.C. COMMUNITIES IDENTIFY NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

WITH TWO-THIRDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA BLANKETED BY FOREST, IT'S NO surprise that the forestry industry is critical to the provincial economy, accounting for seven per cent of employment and 15 per cent of all economic activity. But that mainstay has been threatened by the largest mountain pine beetle infestation in North American history. The outbreak has already destroyed about half of B.C.'s mature pine trees, and devastated the economies of many forestry-dependent communities.

The Government of Canada is responding with the Mountain Pine Beetle Program, led by Natural Resources Canada. Launched in 2007, the program committed \$200 million to control the spread of the mountain pine beetle, recover economic value from destroyed timber and protect against wildfires.

The Community Economic Diversification Initiative (CEDI) is a key component of the program. The two-year initiative, delivered by WD, is investing more than \$33 million to support economic growth, job creation and sustainability of adversely-affected communities. In addition, WD invested more than \$18 million to expand airports in Kelowna, Kamloops and Prince George, increasing economic opportunities in the regions they serve.

More than 140 projects will be funded under CEDI to help communities take advantage of new opportunities to diversify their economies. From expanding tourism and finding new uses for damaged wood to increasing access to training, CEDI is increasing the long-term viability of communities across B.C. AW



SUCCESS STORIES

Member of Parliament Ron Cannan (left) demonstrates the new wood-pallet making equipment under the watchful eye of SBC Firemaster's Paul Adams (right). WD funding of \$93,000 enabled SBC Firemaster Ltd. to purchase the equipment in order to start the production of wood pallets using beetle damaged lumber sawn by the Upper Similkamana Indian Band



The Honourable Jay Hill (left), Member of Parliament for Prince George-Peace River, exam ines a piece of beetle-crete with the University of North British Columbia's (UNBC) Director of Communications, Robert Van Adrichem. The WD investment of \$154.674 will help the University of Northern British Columbia conduct market research to help commercialize Mountain Pine Beetle Wood Concrete Products. The product is an innovative material, made by mixing cement with water and aggregate. This new environmentally friendly product provides a significant value-ciscled alternative to pulp, and is a highly attractive and unique alternative building product



St. Joseph Museum is a reconstructed pioneer village featuring 16 restored buildings and over 20 vintage tractors. The village offers visitors a unique opportunity to see firsthand how the early pioneer farmers lived and worked more than 100 years ago. Photo courtesy of CDEM.

### TOURISM INITIATIVES PROMOTE WESTERN CANADIAN DESTINATIONS

Provincial tourism councils to coordinate international marketing strategy

WHILE SINGING FROM THE SAME songbook ensures unison, the magic of harmony comes from the strategic blending of many voices. Similarly, WD's recent \$5 million investment in a pan-west international marketing campaign will have all four provinces working together to promote Western Canada as a tourist destination. But the magic behind the four-part harmony will be each province's individual appeal.

The Tourism Alliance of Western Canada, a consortium of the provincial tourism councils – Tourism British Columbia, Travel Alberta, Tourism Saskatchewan and Travel Manitoba – will oversee a unified campaign designed to showcase the breadth of tourism opportunities across the West. The campaign will focus on key target markets across the United States, Europe and Asia.

The timing of this initiative also means the campaign can capitalize on increasing international attention as the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver draw nearer. By creating international awareness of the "rest of the West" there is potential to build long-term benefits through extended or repeat visits.

Announced in May 2008, the project will enhance international competitiveness by reinforcing collaboration among the West's tourism sector stakeholders.

This is good news for the more than 200,000 small- and medium-sized businesses involved in tourism across the West, many of which are located in rural communities. By working together to promote the West as a single destination with endless possibilities, the campaign will contribute to economic prosperity in western communities of every size.

#### COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EN ACTION

WD also provided a recent investment of nearly \$800,000 to the Corridor touristique francophone de l'Ouest (CTFO), or Western Francophone Tourism Corridor, a pan-west alliance that promotes Western Canada as a destination for French-speaking tourists. The new funding will be used to expand their reach in national and international markets.

Since 2003, the organization has worked to increase awareness of Western Canada's many Francophone communities as a tourism destination for Quebecers.

Quebec responded. Recently CTFO concluded two successful marketing initiatives, including media tours of the four western provinces and the production and distribution of promotional brochures which were used in several tourism trade shows. The result has been more than 9,000 requests for information and an estimated economic spin-off of almost \$4 million from an original investment of about \$1 million.

Now they plan to build on that success by creating updated marketing tools, organizing promotional tours with national and international French media, and strengthening partnerships with and between industry stakeholders.

The partners of the CTFO are the provincial Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs) – la Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique, le Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, le Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan and le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba.

The four FEDOs, which became part of WD's Business Service Network in 2001, enhance the vitality of Western Canada's minority language communities and assist in their economic development – an objective that this initiative will contribute to AW

#### BUILDING MANITOBA'S ECONOMIC CAPACITY

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES to stimulating economic growth is ensuring that Canadian businesses have access to skilled workers. To address skilled labour shortages, WD works with universities and other post-secondary academic institutions, research institutes, industry associations and other not-for-profit organizations to provide opportunities for skills training and upgrading. Over the past two years, WD has invested in a number of initiatives to maintain and grow Manitoba's local labour pool.



In May 2008, WD invested \$3.12 million towards the development of two Mobile Training Labs at Red River College. The project will help expand Manitoba's trades training capacity by bringing trades training to rural and northern Manitoba communities and linking training opportunities to other community-based projects and emerging industries.

Each lab is self-contained in a 53-foot trailer that transforms into a 950 square-foot training facility, providing rural Manitoba and Aboriginal communities access to trades training. Through this project, the Department is helping address the need for highly qualified skilled workers in areas such as automotive service technician, carpentry, electrical, machining, pipefitting, plumbing, welding, and industrial mechanics.



Red River College's mobile training facilities bring trades training to rural and northern Manitoba communities. Photo credit: Red River College.

#### ABORIGINAL TRAINING PROGRAM FILLS GAP

The Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development has responded to Manitoba's labour market shortages by expanding their training facilities at the Neeginan Institute of Applied Technology (NIAT). In February 2007, WD invested more than \$320,000 to equip Neeginan's expanded training facilities with appropriate equipment for welding, carpentry, and aerospace maintenance training.

To date, Neeginan has graduated 104 trades-people and places approximately 50 students with cutting-edge jobs in the aerospace sector per year. In fact, the Institute's welding program has become nationally certified and is training two shifts of welding students per day.

Moving into the future, the Institute will continue to provide Manitobans with trades training and foster strong partnerships with Manitoba businesses.

#### INCREASING KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

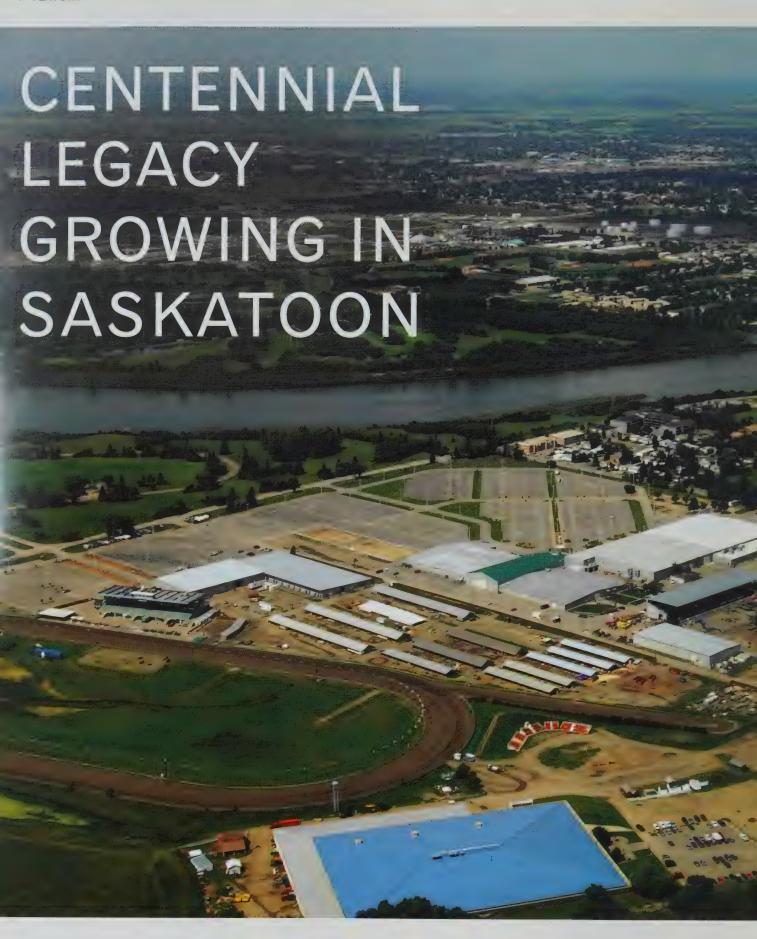
In a bid to facilitate industry-based training programs, increase productivity and global competitiveness, the Manitoba Sector Training Network turned to WD for assistance.

In June 2008, WD invested \$970,000 towards the development of the Sector Council Centre and Training Facility, which serves as a training and business networking facility for sector associations serving industry in Manitoba.

The Centre will fill this gap by pooling resources and sharing the cost of training, providing a competitive advantage to Manitoba business as the province's 16 Sector Councils have limited resources to offer individual training for their members.

To date, the first training groups have moved into the facility and the Manitoba Sector Training Network is completing equipment installation and construction of the Centre's training rooms.

Canada's prosperity depends not just on meeting the challenges of today, but on building the dynamic economy that will create opportunities and better jobs for Canadians in the future. WD is helping to build this economy through a variety of projects that give Manitobans the skills they need to promote productivity and economic development. AW



Left: Aerial photograph of Prairieland Park. Photo credit: Prairieland Park.

Top: New entrance of Prairieland Park facility Photo credit: Prairieland Park.

Middle: Minister Yelich touring the expanded Prairieland Park facility

Bottom: Prairieland Park hosts a crop production show. Photo credit: Prairieland Park







FOUNDED IN 1886, PRAIRIELAND PARK IS SASKATOON'S OLDEST CORPORATION, and it continues to play a vital role in the life of the city. Prairieland hosts the Saskatoon Exhibition every August, and has always been a popular venue for local and regional events. But two recent expansions are now helping the 136-acre facility attract larger events, bringing economic benefits that extend well beyond the park's boundaries.

In 2006, Prairieland received \$4 million in funding from Canada Celebrates Saskatchewan, a Government of Canada initiative to commemorate Saskatchewan's 100th birthday. The initiative invested \$36.8 million in more than 710 capital projects, benefitting almost every Saskatchewan community and creating a lasting legacy of the province's centennial. The investment in Prairieland Park helped increase exhibition space by 50,000 square feet. With more than 200,000 square feet, the park now offers Saskatchewan's largest all-under-one-roof trade exposition space.

When Lynne Yelich, now Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, attended the grand opening of the Prairieland Park expansion in March 2007, she said, "Standing here today, I can see how versatile this space will be and how many different types of events will be hosted here. Saskatoon and the surrounding area will be able to take advantage of the facility's increased capacity, accessing a wider range and broader scope of events."

That prediction was right on the money. In 2007, Prairieland hosted the SKILLS Canada Competition, the first time it has been held in Saskatchewan. The event raised the profile of the park, opening up more opportunities to bid on future major events.

Many of those bids were successful. In June 2008, the Federated Cooperatives Marketing Expo brought 3,600 delegates to Saskatoon. And that September, 3,200 people came to the city for the annual USA-Canada Lions Leadership Forum.

"To say that this project greatly exceeded expectations would be an understatement. The new facility has propelled Prairieland Park onto the national stage," said Mark Regier, CEO of Saskatoon Prairieland Park Corporation. "Seven new major trade shows, bringing thousands of people to Saskatoon, now take place in our newly expanded facilities. As a showcase for business, education, culture and entertainment, this expansion provides Prairieland Park with endless opportunities for future growth and development."

Despite their growing success, Prairieland Park had even bigger plans – the addition of a 20,000 square foot agricultural centre. In 2008, WD invested \$2.4 million in the project with the Province of Saskatchewan and the City of Saskatoon also contributing.

The latest expansion provides dedicated livestock and related tradeshow space, increasing the Park's capacity to host simultaneous events and creating opportunities to host equine events, cattle shows, stock dog demonstrations and industry trade shows.

The expansions have not only created the equivalent of eight full-time positions, events held at the park increase business for numerous local hotels, restaurants and retail operations. Prairieland Park now hosts more than 320 events each year, attracting 1.6 million people and creating an estimated economic impact of more than \$100 million annually. AW

#### BUILDING ECONOMIC STRENGTH THROUGH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

WITH CURRENT GLOBAL ECONOMIC slowdown, advances in science and technology are essential to strengthening Canadian competitiveness and building a dynamic economy that will create new opportunities and better jobs for Canadians in the future.

The Government of Canada's Science and Technology Strategy identifies research and development as key to strengthening Canada's economy and encouraging innovation.

The Government of Canada is supporting Canadian researchers and innovators by investing in new world-class research facilities. Budget 2009 committed more than \$3.8 billion for knowledge infrastructure.

Over the previous three federal budgets, the Government of Canada has made a significant commitment to equipping Canadian laboratories and investing in Canadian innovators. As a result, the federal government now provides \$10.2 billion in annual, direct funding to science and technology.

Last year, WD invested \$127.5 million in 86 projects that support innovation in Western Canada and closely link to the Government of Canada's Science and Technology Strategy. These projects are designed to strengthen infrastructure at our universities and research centres; increase the take-up of new technologies; develop technology skills; support research and development; and increase innovation. AW

### BCIT TO EXPAND RESEARCH INTO ENERGY EFFICIENT GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs reduce greenhouse gases by saving energy year round

FROM THE AIR, MAJOR CITIES OFTEN LOOK LIKE MASSIVE GREY SCARS CUT OUT of the surrounding greenery. But, in cities like Vancouver, that is beginning to change. Green roofs—engineered roofing systems incorporating vegetation—are adding welcome spots of green, enlivening the sterility of the urban environment.

The British Columbia Institute of Technology's (BCIT) Centre for the Advancement of Green Roof Technology is a major reason for the growing acceptance of green roofs. The centre has been contributing to the body of research on green roof technologies since 2003.

In May 2008, BCIT received \$500,000 from WD to expand the Centre's applied research and demonstrations of green roof technologies to various climatic zones and to living wall technologies. Canada's diverse climate provides the perfect environment to test and improve the development of these technologies, which will support the continued development of the sustainable building technologies sector in B.C.

"This support from Western Economic Diversification will help move our green roof research forward in new and exciting ways," said Don Wright, President of BCIT. "At BCIT, our applied research activities directly involve industry so that we can work together to bring solutions to business. This funding and the support of our industry partners will help bring new ideas to architecture, design, construction and more."

The concept of green roofs is far from new. In Newfoundland, reconstructions of Norse sod houses dating from 1000 A.D. have been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, commemorating the earliest known European settlement in North America at L'Anse aux Meadows.

Today, the technology is becoming increasingly popular for its many benefits. By protecting the building from the summer sun and insulating the structure against winter cold, green roofs reduce greenhouse gases by saving energy year round. The rooftop green spaces also provide a welcome habitat for wildlife in urban areas and can be used to create recreational spaces, or even vegetable gardens. AW

BCIT's Green Roof Research Facility, Photo credit: BCIT.



### NEW FACILITY TO TEST ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND VEHICLES

WESTEST, a non-profit industrial testing facility

WHEN COMPANIES LIKE MOTOR
Coach Industries, North America's
largest manufacturer of inter-city
buses, designed a new highway coach,
they turned to Western Canada Testing,
Inc. (WESTEST) in Portage La Prairie.
Soon, companies like Motor Coach
Industires and other will have access to
an expanded suite of services.

WESTEST is expanding its capabilities to test vehicles that use alternate fuels. The new Alternative Fuel and Vehicle Performance Testing Facility, made possible by a WD investment of nearly \$1.7 million in 2008, will enable it to test new and existing transportation technologies.

"The Government of Canada's support comes at a critical time for our sector," said David Gullacher, CEO of WESTEST. "This region of the West enjoys a leading role in the manufacture of inter-city and transit coaches, as well as emergency and recreation vehicles. We are now on the threshold of the alternate fuels era, and this facility will be instrumental in getting our designs right for the production of world-class vehicles with alternate fuel capabilities."

Harvey Chorney, Vice-President of Manitoba Operations agreed, noting that the state-of-the-art testing facility will strengthen Western Canada's vehicle manufacturing sector by contributing to the validation and development of Canada's bio-fuels and bio-fibres value chain.

The new environment-controlled lab will allow WESTEST to carry out performance and durability testing at early stages in the research and development cycle, speeding up commercialization and providing competitive advantages for western companies and original equipment manufacturers. The facility will also enable WESTEST to develop their alternative fuel evaluation capacity, particularly in the area of biodiesel research.

WESTEST, a non-profit industrial testing facility, provides sophisticated physical testing and product performance evaluation services for the transportation, mining, machine, equipment and packaging manufacturing industry. AW

#### **WD** and Environmental **Technologies**

WD supports a wide range of initiatives that strengthen Western Canada's environmental technology sector. In 2008/2009, WD invested:

- \$1 million towards
   Saskatchewan's Petroleum
   Technology Research Centre
   to research and develop new
   technologies that will enhance
   oil recovery.
- \$3 million for the University of Lethbridge acquire of leadingedge research equipment for the Alberta Water and Environmental Sciences Building.
- \$1.2 million for FPInnovations towards the commercialization of biomass gasification technology.







#### THE FUTURE OF FOOD

#### Functional foods and nutraceuticals are big business

WESTERN CANADA'S EMERGENCE AS A WORLD LEADER IN NUTRACEUTICALS represents new opportunities to add value to agricultural products such as oats, barley, flax, canola, corn and soy, it also has the potential to reduce health care costs and improve human health.

Functional foods and nutraceuticals are big business, and they're getting bigger every year. According to BCC Research, the global market for nutraceuticals was valued at \$117.3 billion in 2007, and it is expected to approach \$177 billion by 2013.

Much of that growth can be attributed to an increased awareness of the role diet plays in diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Increasingly, consumers are looking beyond basic nutrition to the disease prevention and health-enhancing compounds contained in many foods.



A researcher at the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals works with a flame tester.



A researcher at the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals works in a dust booth.

#### PRAIRIE PLANTS HOLD THE PROMISE OF BETTER HEALTH

Over the past two years, scientists at the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals (RCFFN) in Winnipeg have learned a great deal about the plants of Western Canada. Research undertaken by the centre has confirmed that many native plants have significant health benefits.

Now Dr. Peter Jones, Director of RCFFN, says it's time to move on to the next stage. Describing commercialization as the centre's new mantra, he said, "We've been doing lots of ivory tower research, but now we've got to get into the translation of that research into products that you and I can use to benefit our health and will also serve (as a boost) for small and medium enterprises in Manitoba and for producers."

Working with industry partner Wildly Canadian, products developed at the Richardson Centre will begin moving into the marketplace this year. For example, Aboriginal cultures have used teas made from birch tree "chaga" to treat digestive disorders for hundreds of years. Noting the historical use of the plant, Dr. Curtis Rempel of the RCFFN has experimented with various combinations that is more appealing to modern consumers.

Rempel is proud of what has already been accomplished, but emphasizes there is more territory to explore and much bigger benefits that could accrue. He thinks chaga could be beneficial for people suffering from inflammation and RCFFN's research is looking for ways to. isolate and purify the compounds responsible for the beneficial effect.

Another project currently underway at RCFFN is studying a peptide derived from peas that is thought to block the main factor responsible for high blood pressure. The novel protein has shown great promise in early testing and, if human trials confirm the effect, the five million Canadians who suffer from hypertension may eventually be able to control their blood pressure with nutraceuticals rather than drugs.

The Richardson Centre, located in Smartpark at the University of Manitoba, has received \$10 million in funding from WD since 2006. The centre houses about 100 scientists, representing disciplines such as agriculture, food sciences, human ecology, medicine and pharmacy. AW

#### Life sciences in Manitoba

Manitoba's strength in nutraceuticals and functional foods is part of the province's growing strength in life sciences. The sector – which includes research and development organizations, service firms and more than 40 private companies – employs about 4,200 people.

Other complementary capabilities within Manitoba's life sciences sector include advanced expertise in the development of cereal and oilseed crop varieties and cereal genomics, especially concentrated at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Agriculture, the Cereal Research Centre, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.



As part of the study, CCARM delivers products containing flaxseed to study participants. Photo by Bill Peters.

#### FLAX ... GOOD FOR YOU AND THE ECONOMY

Dedicated to understanding the health-value of nutraceuticals, functional foods and natural health products, the Canadian Centre for Agrifood Research in Health and Medicine (CCARM) focuses much of its research on the benefits of crops grown in Western Canada. Currently, CCARM undertaking several projects, including the health benefits of flaxseed.

Located in Winnipeg, the centre is a unique partnership between St. Boniface General Hospital, the University of Manitoba, and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. Since 2005, WD has invested \$3.3 million in CCARM through the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement and, in July 2008 provided \$800,000 to create two new laboratories and purchase research equipment.

"These labs will hold clinical trial research activities and also provide a shared lab where CCARM researchers can collaborate in a more efficient, economical and productive fashion than was previously possible. This allows us to advance our research into nutraceuticals and functional foods in a manner that has not been attempted anywhere else in the world," said Dr. Grant Pierce, Executive Director of Research, St. Boniface General Hospital.

In October 2008, CCARM began a major study investigating the influence of a flaxseed-enriched diet on cardiovascular disease. The massive study, lead by Dr. Grant Pierce and Dr. Randy Guzman, involves 250 patients, half of whom will eat foods containing flax every day for the next two years. The other half of study participants will eat the same foods without the flaxseed.

The research team hypothesizes that the volunteers consuming flaxseed will suffer from fewer heart health problems and will have better stamina during exercise than the control group. AW

#### The Benefits of Flaxseed

Flaxseed contains a very high level of Omega-3 fatty acids, which have been found to be beneficial to human health. And because Canada produces about 40 per cent of the world's flax supply, Canadian agricultural producers could experience major economic benefits as more is learned about how flax can most effectively be used as part of a healthy diet.





A demonstration of virtual probe chip testing technology developed by Scanimetrics, one the ACAMP client companies.

#### NEW CENTRE TO BRING NANOTECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS TO WORLD MARKETS

MICROSYSTEMS AND NANOTECHNOLOGY (MNT) may not be household words yet, but the technology is expected to have major scientific and economic impacts in the future. Alberta, with the fastest growing nanotechnology sector in Canada, is well-positioned to capitalize on this burgeoning sector.

The Alberta Centre for Advanced MNT Products (ACAMP), is a new business and technical services provider with the goal of building world-class capability for business development, product development, and the packaging and assembly of micro- and nano-scale technology devices, turning them into market-ready products and applications.

"It's incredible the number of emerging technology companies in Alberta with the potential to develop exciting new consumer products for worldwide markets," said Ken Brizel, CEO of ACAMP. "Alberta is a prime location for world-class research, and ACAMP can provide the means to turn research into viable products. In fact, we are already helping our clients produce marketable products to compete globally."

In August 2008, WD provided \$3.5 million to ACAMP for the purchase and installation of specialized equipment, and, to date, has invested more than \$13.5 million to strengthen nanotechnology research and commercialization in Alberta.

"Alberta is a prime location for world-class research, and ACAMP can provide the means to turn research into viable products." - Ken Brizel, CEO of ACAMP

ACAMP will work closely with other organizations in the Alberta nanotechnology sector – including the National Institute for Nanotechnology, the University of Alberta, and the University of Calgary's Advanced Microsystems Integration Facility – to help customers commercialize MNT devices by providing marketing, product development, packaging and assembly services.

#### What is nanotechnology?

Nano comes from the Greek word for "tiny" and, as a prefix, means a billionth. So, a nanometer is a billionth of a meter. To suggest how small that is, a single sheet of paper is about 100.000 nanometers thick.

Scientists have only scratched the surface of the technology's potential. With applications that could include tiny molecular robots that swim through the bloodstream and fight disease, substances that digest toxic waste, and superstrong ultralight materials that could greatly extend the boundaries of space flight, nanotechnology has the potential to change our lives and the world itself.

In February 2009, the centre began holding quarterly sessions, inviting researchers and companies to pitch their business cases. Proponents who are able to convince ACAMP's Executive Board of the value of their proposals can receive a grant for up to \$25,000 in business services.

The Province of Alberta is aiming to capture two per cent of the global market by 2020, which would generate an estimated \$20 billion of new economic activity.



A high performance launcher used for evaluating new aerial technologies on display at the Canadian Centre for Unmanned Vehicle Systems in Medicine Hat, AB.

### UNMANNED VEHICLES TAKE OFF WITH NEW AERIAL LAUNCHER

IF YOU THINK ABOUT INDUSTRIES IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA, AGRICULTURE, tourism, and oil and gas are likely to spring to mind. But if you look up, you'll find an entirely different industry that is becoming a big part of the regional economy – unmanned vehicle systems (UVS).

Central to this growing sector is Canadian Forces Base Suffield near Medicine Hat. The base houses one of seven Defence Research Development Canada (DRDC) research centres and world-class testing facilities for ground and airborne unmanned vehicles. DDRC, an agency of the Department of National Defence, is an acknowledged leader in robotics and unmanned vehicles,

U.K.-based Meggitt Defence Systems, which specializes in aerospace equipment, high performance sensors, defence training and combat systems, also has offices in Medicine Hat.

Most recently the city has become home to the Canadian Centre for Unmanned Vehicle Systems (CCUVS). Created in 2006, the Centre is a not-for-profit organization that aims to become the design, development, testing, evaluation and commercialization hub for Canada's UVS industry.

In July 2008, WD helped further that goal by providing \$900,000 for the purchase of a Finnish-manufactured high-performance Robonics MC2555LLR launcher to test and evaluate unmanned aerial vehicles. The service, which is the first of its kind in Canada, is expected to improve competitiveness and productivity by providing a cost-effective way for Canadian and international companies to develop and test new technologies.

The launcher, which will be located and operated primarily at the Experimental Proving Grounds of Canadian Forces Base Suffield, will help solidify CCUVS's growing reputation. Last year, Israel Aerospace Industries and MacDonald Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. used CCUVS's facilities to test the Heron UAV system. According to the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, the test set a new precedent for operating a large unmanned vehicle in Canadian airspace. The first Heron was delivered to the Canadian Air Force in October 2008, and will be used by Canadian forces in Afghanistan. Aw

#### What is an Unmanned Vehicle System (UVS)?

Unmanned Vehicles Systems are uninhabited, unpiloted, remotely controlled vehicles that can be equipped to perform a variety of tasks. Besides military applications, unmanned aerial vehicle systems are used in natural resource mapping, meteorology, agriculture, policing and security.

#### GENOMICS RESEARCH TO SUPPORT GROWING SHELLFISH INDUSTRY

THANKS TO A NEW SHELLFISH Genomics Laboratory at Vancouver Island University's Centre for Shellfish Research, the \$6 million in lost product that B.C. aquaculture companies experienced in 2007 will be minimized in the future.

A WD investment of \$400,000 will help the Centre develop diagnostic tools to monitor the health of shellfish to create a clearer understanding of how different kinds of shellfish respond to biological and environmental stress factors such as water temperature, salinity, oxygen levels and pollutants. In turn, that understanding will help B.C.'s coastal communities take advantage of the growing international market for shellfish by building a more successful and sustainable aquaculture industry.

Aquaculture operations are an increasingly important component of British Columbia's \$198 million shellfish industry. In 2007, shellfish farmers accounted for nearly 20 per cent of total production. By 2030, that number is expected to exceed 50 per cent.

"Most people have heard the expression 'happy as a clam', but the truth is we do not have any tools to determine if a clam is happy (healthy)," said Dr. Helen Gurney-Smith, who leads the University's shellfish genomics research program."Genomic science can provide the necessary tools". AW





## SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

#### Canada's Global Commerce Strategy

The federal government is investing \$50 million a year through a comprehensive plan that will:

- improve Canada's competitive position by facilitating the exchange of investment capital, innovation and talent between Canada and the rest of the world,
- connect businesses to global markets by re-aligning and equipping Canada's international network to provide services that meet the needs of modern, internationally-engaged firms, and
- strengthen access to global markets and networks through a renewed international negotiations agenda.

In 2008, the Global Commerce
Strategy made significant progress
in securing access to Latin
American markets with the signing
of Free Trade Agreements with
Columbia and Peru. A series of
memorandums of understanding
were also completed with Chile
that will increase cooperation in
areas including investment and
science and technology.

WD UNDERTAKES AND SUPPORTS RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES THAT link to the Government of Canada's commitment to enhancing international trade and investment. By investing in research that focuses on the unique economic opportunities in each western region, the department is well-positioned to make strategic investments that maximize the trade and investment benefits for western Canadian economy.

A new research study, prepared by North West International Ltd., suggests there are important opportunities for Western Canada to enhance bilateral trade and investment with the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region.

The study, Western Canada and Latin America: Existing and Potential Commercial Relationships, found that increased economic growth and stability, and improved social conditions, are making many countries in the LAC region more attractive for international involvement. In particular, Chile and Brazil were identified as promising markets for western Canadian businesses in a wide range of industry sectors.

#### NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES

Although western Canadian trade with LAC is currently dominated by agricultural commodities, new opportunities are emerging. Advancements in Latin America's mining and energy sectors are creating demand for western Canadian expertise in advanced oil and gas recovery technologies, equipment and support services. And, as environmental awareness in the region grows, the West's strength in environmental technologies such as fuel cells and biofuels is of increasing interest. Additional opportunities exist in a variety of science and technology sectors including aerospace, aquaculture, ocean technologies, geomatics and vaccines.

Canada is working diligently to strengthen trade with Latin American countries through Government of Canada's Global Commerce Strategy (see sidebar). The Latin America and Caribbean region is one of the priority markets for the Strategy, which is helping Canadian businesses capitalize on new market opportunities around the world. The region is also a priority for WD, which works to enhance the participation of western Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises in key export markets. Aw

Western Canada and Latin America: Existing and Potential Commercial Relationships, and other WD-supported economic research, can be accessed from the WD website at www.wd.gc.ca/eng/56.asp.

### TRADE AND INVESTMENT

WD PROMOTES EXPORT AS A MEANS OF GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION FOR small- and medium-enterprises (SMEs) and delivers, directly or through other organizations, skill development and export readiness services to SMEs that are looking to export.

With exports accounting for almost 40 per cent of economic activity and linked to a quarter of all Canadian jobs, international trade is a critical foundation of Canada's economy. As a result, Trade and Investment (TI) has become one of WD's top priorities.

WD's Trade and Investment Framework guides the department's activities in this area, as part of a coordinated national trade agenda working to improve international competitiveness and strengthen trade and economic corridors of importance to the West. As well, WD's TI activities complement the priorities of the Government of Canada's Global Commerce Strategy and Science and Technology Strategy.

#### CREATING INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Export markets are important to business growth and success, and WD works to increase export opportunities in key North American, Asian and Latin American markets. The department also supports the international market penetration of western Canadian technologies, services and value-added products. Through activities that market western Canadian exports and promote the region as a prime location for investment, WD focuses international attention on western capabilities, expertise and potential.

WD also plays an important role in supporting skill development and export readiness services for small- and medium-enterprises (SMEs) to boost their presence in international markets.

#### ATTRACTING INVESTMENT

In 2008 for example, WD, with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the western provinces, hosted a Technology Capabilities Study Tour to explore opportunities for increasing trade and investment in new and emerging sectors of the western Canadian economy.

Trade commissioners and science and technology officers from Canadian Posts in North Asia came to Western Canada, touring about two dozen cutting-edge facilities to learn more about the West's growing capabilities in the Information and Communication Technology, Environment and Natural Resources Technologies, Life Sciences and Biotechnology, and Aerospace and Defence sectors.

In 2004, a similar tour was held for Canadian consular staff posted in the U.S. Since then, WD has continued to pursue opportunities that emerged from that tour. To date, WD has undertaken about 75 trade and investment projects, including a supplier development mission to help western Canadian companies sell their products to the U.S. Department of Defense and a trade mission to California that brought together venture capitalists, business leaders and Canadian expatriates to expand investment in western Canadian technologies. AW

#### **Encouraging International Trade**

Trade advisory services are provided by WD's Canada Business service centres in all four western provinces and in 2007/08 WD funding helped to establish Small Business BC's TradeStart program. Since its inception in September 2007, TradeStart has assisted 25 B.C. small businesses become export ready and 200 companies have participated in export preparedness initiatives.



#### STRENGTHENING TRADE ROUTES

The department also works to enhance trade routes between North America, Asia-Pacific and Western Canada. For example, the Port Alberta initiative, a project aimed at establishing Edmonton region as a major inland port.



#### RETROSPECTIVE



The Institute for Reconstructive Sciences in Medicine (iRSM) in Edmonton, AB, is an internationally recognized leader in the complex area of osseointegration (bone) implanted devices for prosthetic replacement of skull and facial defects resulting from cancer, trauma and congenital conditions. Photo credit: iRSM.

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement no. 40063159

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# ALBERTA PUTS A NEW FACE ON SURGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

WHEN CANCER, INJURY OR CONGENITAL DISEASE CREATES MAJOR PHYSICAL defects, reconstruction can be a long and difficult process for patients, particularly when the defects are in highly-visible areas of the head and neck.

Fortunately, there have been enormous strides in medical reconstructive sciences over the past two decades, many of them made in Alberta. The province has become an acknowledged world leader in the field, thanks to the shared vision of Dr. John Wolfaardt and Dr. Gordon Wilkes.

"At the time the options for facial reconstruction were limited. It was frustrating for the patients and for us. Patients who had lost significant parts of their faces had to endure the daily cumbersome and painful procedure of gluing facial prostheses onto their sensitive skin," Dr. Wolfaardt says. "We knew something really different was needed."

In 1993, the pair founded the Craniofacial Osseointegration and Maxillofacial Prosthetic Rehabilitation Unit, now known as the Institute for Reconstructive Sciences in Medicine (iRSM) at Edmonton's Misericordia Hospital. Since then, research and development undertaken at iRSM have furthered knowledge of surgical techniques, prosthetic therapy, and behavioral and functional outcomes, helping patients across Canada and around the world.

The innovative, multi-disciplinary iRSM team combines expertise in diverse disciplines including surgery, medicine, dentistry, rehabilitation medicine, engineering and computing science. As a result, many of iRSM's patients no longer have to glue prostheses to their faces. Instead, biomechanical implants, such as hearing devices, can be permanently anchored to the bone.

A WD investment of nearly \$1 million helped to construct and equip the Medical Modeling Research Laboratory (MMRL), the first lab of its kind in Canada. The MMRL enables surgeons to create a three-dimensional virtual and physical model of a patient's head and neck, which leads to better outcomes for patients, time and cost savings in the operating room, and improved teaching and information sharing capabilities.

In 2006, WD invested \$975,000 in a second project that will enable trial testing of the Implant Manager software, a dental implant management system created by iRSM's surgical research team and Redengine Inc., an Alberta-based software development company. Implant Manager enables clinicians to view three-dimensional images of implants prior to surgery, and acts as an effective tool in educating patients and their families about the procedures.

The development, demonstration and testing phases included piloting the technology at 10 sites in six countries. Implant Manager has attracted international attention and commercialization opportunities are now being explored.

In 2008, Drs. Wolfaardt and Wilkes received the ASTech Foundation Special Award. The ASTech Awards celebrate and promote the achievements of Alberta's scientific and technological communities in order to inspire future innovation and leadership in the province. AW

driving the future

Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français ISSN: 1495-6802 (print) ISSN: 1495-6543 (online)

# ACCESS

#### **FALL 2010**

INNOVATION
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION
FEATURE
CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
RETROSPECTIVE











# MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE LYNNE YELICH

The Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

THIS YEAR, THE WORLD SAW EXACTLY what Western Canada is capable of accomplishing. The Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games brought the world to our doorstep, allowing Vancouver to play host to not just top athletes, but also world and business leaders. Before, during, and after the Games, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) seized every opportunity to help Western Canada showcase its strengths to the world.

Even while Canada and the rest of the world were struggling with one of the worst economic downturns in recent history, WD's investments in projects promoting innovation, community economic and business development were helping our region emerge from this recession stronger than ever.

Our investments in innovation are improving the productivity of traditional and emerging industries, and putting Western Canada at the forefront of the knowledge-based economy. In Alberta, WD investments are helping the Alberta Centre for Advanced Microsystems and Nanotechnology Products (ACAMP) commercialize micro and nanotechnologies. In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre will transform a wide variety of agricultural crops into innovative consumer food products. And in British Columbia, a recent WD investment is helping the University of British Columbia establish cuttingedge 3D technology to further mining

Accounting for nearly half of all existing jobs, small businesses are a vital source of economic growth in the West and remain a top priority for WD. We invest in projects that equip the next generation of entrepreneurs and skilled workers with what they need to thrive in the global marketplace. In Manitoba, WD has invested in CentrePort Canada Inc., which will take advantage of duty and tax relief programs and Winnipeg's key location to leverage foreign investment and link businesses to international markets.

WD also continues its work with other levels of government and communities to help them adjust to challenging economic circumstances and promote rural diversification. Over the past year, our Department has been busy delivering the Community Adjustment Fund and Recreational Infrastructure Canada program under Canada's Economic Action Plan throughout Western Canada. These programs are creating jobs, and helping workers and communities get back on their feet.

Western Canada has a lot to offer the world, and as this issue of *Access West* illustrates, WD is working hard to help western economies, entrepreneurs, and innovation prosper. I am confident that our efforts will assist Western Canada in emerging stronger than ever. Because a stronger West is a stronger Canada.



# MICRO AND NANOTECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMING ALBERTA INDUSTRIAL BASE

FORTY YEARS AGO, THE WORD WAS microelectronics. Today, the hot topic is nanotechnology. At least, that's the case at the Alberta Centre for Advanced Microsystems and Nanotechnology Products (ACAMP), where commercialization of micro and nanotechnologies is helping transform the province's industrial base.

ACAMP is a not-for-profit organization that provides specialized business services to microsystems and nanotechnology (MNT) clients. WD, together with the Government of Alberta and industry partners, played an important role in helping to launch the initiative more than two years ago. WD has subsequently invested a total of more than \$8.9 million towards the installation of state-of-the-art equipment at the Centre.

The most recent investment of over \$1.9 million is supporting the extension of ACAMP's development and commercialization services into new specialized areas, including geomatic products, laser product assembly, and microfluidic devices.

"With this support, corporations will now have the capability to compete worldwide in the area of complex integrated micro and nano based systems," said Ken Brizel, CEO of ACAMP.

This latest investment builds on WD's previous contributions towards the purchasing of equipment. Thanks to a \$3.5 million contribution in May 2009, manufacturers in Alberta's biomedical, agricultural, communications, environment, and forestry sectors – along with energy and aerospace interests – have access to Canada's first low-temperature co-fired ceramics packaging facility. They also have access to the technical and business development staff at ACAMP.



Prime Minister Harper and Minister Yelich tour the ACAMP facility at the October 8. 2010 announcement.

Assembly technologies, such as low temperature co-fired ceramics, are inorganic non-metallic materials that can withstand extreme conditions, making them ideal for environments in which conventional metal or plastics would fail. "Those kinds of temperature differences cause normal electronics to burn up," said ACAMP's CEO, Ken Brizel. "A lot of companies haven't had much experience or expertise in building those kinds of products before."

The oil and gas industry, for one, has a long wish list for electronic monitors that can work at the bottom of a well, where temperatures can climb to upwards of 200 degrees Celsius. Aerospace firms have similar needs for orbiting satellites whose parts can tolerate triple-digit temperatures both above and below zero.

"We're bringing processes and technologies to Alberta that didn't exist before," said Brizel. "We help companies design for manufacturability and then they go home and mass produce them."

If an entrepreneur has managed to get past the idea stage into prototyping, they're a candidate to join the Centre's client list, now at 48 companies and growing. "We only work with clients who have a working prototype and are incorporated," added Brizel. "It's not about basic research; it's about diversifying the province's economy with cutting-edge products." In addition to a manufacturing facility, the Centre offers clients advanced simulation tools that analyze products in a virtual environment, and runs a series of seminars for innovators across the province.



MP Mark Warawa meets with UBC's Dr. Don Brooks and Dr. Simon Peacock following WD's funding announcement

### UBC USES 3D TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE MINING RESEARCH

NOT EVERY UNIVERSITY WOULD HAVE the capacity to accept a sizable donation of diamond exploration drill core. But at the University of British Columbia, the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences received such an offer from one of the world's largest mining companies.

Fortunately, the university had also received a \$960,000 commitment from WD to help establish a smart mineral exploration and mining research centre. Professor Greg Dipple, who now directs the formally titled Centre for Environmental Change and Planetary Stewardship, said the timing couldn't have been better. "We wouldn't have this amazing collection if we hadn't had the good luck of securing funding a few months before."

The drill core is housed in the Centre's new Field Support Facility, which doubles the university's storage capacity for such materials. The core will give researchers invaluable insight into the geology of Northern Canada.

In addition to housing the drill core, the Centre used WD support to assemble a cutting-edge visualization facility, which uses the same polarized imaging technology as the new generation of 3D films, such as the highly acclaimed "Avatar." Students and faculty can examine complex data from oil and gas deposits or mineral formations in three dimensions without leaving campus, cutting travel expenses significantly. "Now we're hosting meetings with industry on campus," said Professor Dipple. "It's having a real effect on research."

The third element of the Centre is the Environmental Interface Laboratory, essentially a large sand tank that allows researchers to simulate how water and other materials flow and react underground. For example, one team is studying the capacity of certain mine wastes to absorb carbon dioxide as part of the global effort to find ways to mitigate the climate-changing effects of fossil fuel use.

The Centre is devoted to improving mineral exploration technologies and minimizing their impact on the Earth. Most of the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences' 170 graduate students and 45 faculty members will make use of the new facilities, which are scheduled to move into a new \$75-million complex on the UBC campus in 2012.

# MAKING HEALTHIER FOOD WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

CONSUMERS WANT MORE CHOICES in healthy snacks. Farmers need to stay competitive and make the most efficient use of their crops. New food processing technology in Saskatoon is helping address both demands.

Since December 2009, the
Saskatchewan Food Industry
Development Centre has been taking
advantage of a new \$78,300 package of
accessories for its extruder, purchased
with a contribution from WD. The
Centre bought the twin screw extruder
two years ago with \$800,000 in WD
support. The twin screw extruder can
transform a wide variety of agricultural
crops, from soybeans to peas, into innovative consumer food products. With
the new accessories, the extruder's
potential in exploring commercialization
opportunities are greater than ever.

"Extrusion is used in a wide range of familiar food products, from cereals, pasta, and snack food to animal food," said Dan Prefontaine, the Centre's President. "But the real growth industry these days are healthy snacks and easy-to-prepare main courses, particularly foods that don't include ingredients like wheat or soy, to which many consumers are either allergic or have aversions."

At the same time, demand for alternatives to meat is driving much of the innovation.



Dan Prefontaine shows Minister Yelich one of the many products developed and commercialized with the assistance of the Food Centre.

"You can make a product with extrusion that's very similar in appearance to meat," said Prefontaine. "The idea is not to replace meat, but to give people alternatives." From the farmer's point of view, the new extrusion equipment also offers a chance to make use of byproducts, such as pea shells, that otherwise would be thrown away.

So far, the Food Centre has attracted a dozen clients from across North America hoping to create new, healthy alternative food products. "We've already developed a couple of glutenfree products," said Prefontaine.

Besides human food, the upgraded extruder is also capable of producing pet food and biodegradable packaging materials that can fill the same niche as plastic foam "peanuts," only in a more ecologically responsible manner.

### STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT ATTRACTS TOP TALENT

MANITOBA'S GROWING LIFE SCIENCES sector is luring top research talent to the province, thanks to state-of-the-art laboratory equipment recently acquired by the University of Manitoba.

At the university's new Centre of Excellence for Regenerative Medicine, the purchase of modern scientific equipment was a key factor in the decision of several leading scientists to come to Winnipeg. In each case, it was the chance to work on state-of-the-art machines that sealed the deal, said Dr. Geoff Hicks, Director of the school's Regenerative Medicine Program.

Among the "essentials" is a device that can identify and isolate stem cells, the primitive cells that can transform themselves into all of the specialized cells in the body. This device attracted Dr. Afshin Raouf, who studies the role of stem cells in breast cancer. "He wouldn't have come without it," said Dr. Hicks.

Similarly, neurobiologist Dr. Soheila Karimi made the move to Winnipeg in large part because of a new confocal microscope, a device that gives researchers extraordinarily sharp images of the tiniest of cellular components. Dr. Karimi's research focuses on how stem cells can be used to repair spinal-cord injuries. From heart attacks to Parkinson's disease to diabetes, the list of possible applications for stem-cell therapies is constantly growing.

Dr. Hicks' team will also take advantage of the combined resources of the burgeoning biomedical research community in Manitoba. The goal is to put the Centre at the forefront of regenerative medicine research and offer top-quality health care, said Dr. Hicks. "The hope is the clinical applications will be quick and direct."

In May 2009, WD committed \$1.7 million toward purchasing the equipment for the Centre, which is the only such

facility in the Prairie region. In addition to attracting new highly qualified personnel to the region, WD's investment is expected to generate additional research funding estimated at \$7.2 million over the first three years of the project. The investment will also allow the Centre to pursue new collaborative relationships with complimentary facilities worldwide, generating new research opportunities and associated grant funding.

The research done at the Centre will provide the basis for the development of new medical procedures for the regeneration of muscles, heart tissues, nerve tissues and brain tissues in relation to various diseases.



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### SEEKING NEW FORMS OF ENERGY CONSERVATION

HOMES FITTED WITH FULLY AUTOMATED APPLIANCES MAY BE CLOSER TO reality than people may think, thanks to the kind of research being conducted at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). Soon, your freezer will know to turn off when it's empty, while the washing machine and dishwasher will negotiate which gets priority during peak energy use hours. Coordinating these automated activities will be an "intelligent agent" somewhere between your home and the local power supplier.

Welcome to the microgrid, a critical element of the global campaign to conserve energy according to a team of engineers at BCIT. "There's no doubt we're moving toward new forms of energy conservation measures," said Dr. Hassan Farhangi, Director of BCIT's Microgrid project at the school's new Centre for Applied Research and Innovation.

The BCIT Microgrid is a six-year experiment in putting new electricity production and distribution technologies to work. The microgrid will act as a testbed where communication technologies, smart metering, power generation, and even smart appliances will be integrated. It will also be used for applied research and development for future electricity grids.

In October 2009, through the Western Economic Partnership Agreement, WD announced a \$2 million federal investment to help BCIT develop this leading-edge electricity grid demonstration project.

The first phase of the project – installation of the energy monitoring and control equipment – is underway. Next comes two years of testing and tinkering. Project goals include improving energy grid reliability, efficiency and compatibility.

"BCIT Microgrid is planning for almost one megawatt of renewable electricity generated on the Institute's campus," said Dr. Farhangi. "There are several solar arrays, a planned small wind turbine and a multi-fuel generator that can run on a variety of different fuels. Our target is to turn BCIT into an independent power producer."

According to Dr. Farhangi, there's no other similar campus-wide system in Canada that combines smart appliances with sophisticated metering and computer-controlled distribution networks to keep electricity consumed by the school to a minimum.



BCIT President Don Wright, MP Russ Hiebert and MLA Richard Lee outside of the Centre for Applied Research and Innovation building.

### HIGH-TECH TRAINING FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

IN RESPONSE TO A NEED IDENTIFIED by industry, the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development (CAHRD) is delivering training to prepare Aboriginal students for high-demand trades needed to support Manitoba's industrial growth and competitiveness.

Training is delivered through a division of CAHRD, the Neeginan Institute of Applied Technology - a unique centre that delivers certified trades training programs in partnership with industry, universities and colleges. The Neeginan Institute provides an opportunity for students, many of whom would otherwise be unemployed, to raise their skill

or academic level so they can undertake training for high-demand trades. CAHRD is a community driven, not-for-profit human resource development organization that delivers education, training and employment services to Winnipeg's urban Aboriginal population, as well as support services like housing and child care. This inclusive, holistic approach is key to the success of the program and results in graduates taking on long-term sustainable jobs.

In April 2010, Minister Yelich announced a Government of Canada investment of \$379,977 (\$276,669 from WD and \$103,308 from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada through the

Urban Aboriginal Strategy) for CAHRD. The funding provides equipment and tools to help Aboriginal students become skilled workers in the aerospace industry in areas such as gas turbine repair, as well as overhaul and manufacturing.

"This initiative is providing good career potential within the aerospace sector for Aboriginal students, and as a result, is proving to be beneficial to Winnipeg's Aboriginal community," said Wayne Helgason, Chairperson of the Board of Directors at CAHRD. "It also shows that CAHRD, in partnership with industry and government, is responding to current labour market needs."

# TESTING MEDICAL DEVICES AT NEW BIOMEDICAL CENTRE

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY TO TEST new medical devices. An innovative way is to build a device that can simulate what happens inside the body – enter the ElectroForce Systems Group, a division of the Bose Corporation.

Better known for its speakers and other home audio products, Bose is applying its expertise in electrical systems to the biomedical field by teaming up with researchers at the University of Calgary. The two partners are in the process of setting up the Bose Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering Technology Development Centre, which is intended to be a world leader for the development of biomedical "test frames."

The frames create an artificial testing environment in which temperature, pressure, oxygen levels and other conditions can be precisely controlled using the same technology behind the

electrical motors Bose uses to reproduce sound. The goal is the development of new gear to diagnose, treat and prevent diseases.

"We could design stents that would help expand blood vessels and see how they respond to the stresses and strains of the human body," said Dr. Jeff Dunn, Canada Research Chair in Biomedical Imaging and a Professor in the Department of Radiology. "We'll be the only group in the world with all the Bose test frame equipment in one place."

Building, outfitting and staffing the new Centre will cost about \$7.3 million, with WD contributing just over \$4 million of the total and the balance from the province, both through the Canada-Alberta Western Economic Partnership Agreement. Some 20 researchers are expected to move into the new labs later this year, said Dunn.

Bose has been working for several years with University of Calgary teams studying the company's test frames. So when the university raised the prospect of a dedicated research centre, the decision to work together was an easy one for both sides. "Their approach to research just seemed to mesh well with ours, both philosophically and at the personality level," said the General Manager of the ElectroForce Systems Group, Ed Moriarty.

Bose has long had a strong research division, Moriarty said, but until now there was no central laboratory dedicated to the biomedical gear.

Neeginan has formed strong partnerships with both Boeing Canada and Standard Aero. Currently, 16 participants have been accepted into a program at Boeing, 11 participants are training to be gas turbine repair and overhaul employees for Standard Aero, and 26 other companies are working with CAHRD to hire graduates.

This project builds on previous WD funded projects with CAHRD for the Neeginan Institute to provide training in trades such as welding, machining, carpentry, milling, lathe operation, and aerospace maintenance. This training is helping fill Manitoba's labour shortages in trades with skilled Aboriginal people.



Marine a return of Somerage and a later to the tops

### CUTTING-EDGE TESTING FACILITY OPENS IN NORTHERN MANITOBA

NORTHERN MANITOBA AND THE world's aviation industry will benefit from the development of a state-of-theart cold weather testing and research facility in Thompson. On October 29, 2010, Minister Yelich joined federal, provincial and industry leaders for the grand opening celebrations of the Global Aerospace Centre for Icing and Environmental Research (GLACIER) facility and the not-forprofit Environmental Test. Research and Education Center (EnviroTREC).

"Our Government is proud to be involved in this exciting partnership," said Minister Yelich. "By working together to develop this state-of-the-art facility we are promoting cutting-edge technology, and creating high-quality jobs and educational opportunities right here in northern Manitoba."

EnviroTREC is a year-round research facility that specializes in supporting engine icing certification and research and development of new, more efficient and advanced aerospace designs. Through partnerships with secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, EnviroTREC will offer a wide variety of aeronautical sciences and aerospace research and maintenance programs to attract, develop, and retain highly-qualified professionals within Canada. The testing technology used will also be applicable in other sectors, such as bus and automotive manufacturing.



Following the grand opening Min ster Yelich operates the jet engine throttle with Saman Raza. MDS Project Coordinator.

EnviroTREC is co-located with industry in the new facility built by GLACIER, which is a limited joint venture between Rolls-Royce Canada Limited and Pratt & Whitney Canada.

"Without the efforts and financial support of Western Economic Diversification Canada, this facility would not be here today," said Roxie Binns, Thompson Unlimited's Winter Weather Testing Development Coordinator. "This icing facility has elevated Thompson to the global stage, clearly showing that we are a Centre of Excellence for cold weather testing, and bringing with it opportunities for the entire community."

Government of Canada funding for the facility, including a WD investment of \$8.4 million, is helping this major northern initiative create valueadded economic activities in northern Manitoba as the knowledge and technology developed in Thompson emerge into commercial opportunities.

# ALBERTA'S RURAL DIVERSIFICATION INITIATIVE

Community Futures Alberta's Rural Diversification Initiative (RDI) is an important WD-funded program that is helping to deliver significant economic gains through partnerships between communities and entrepreneurs. In order to compete, rural communities must build long-term sustainability, adapt to the current economy, and maintain a broad economic base with a variety of businesses and jobs. The following are just two examples of how RDI is working in Alberta.

### ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES HELP DIVERSIFY ALBERTA ECONOMY

In September 2008, RDI invested more than \$150,000 towards the implementation of the South East Alberta Technology Strategy (SEATS). The Strategy, led by Community Futures Entre-Corp, brings technology-based businesses and Medicine Hat College together to address the growing demand for skilled workers and leverage business opportunities in the technology sector. To date, the project has provided one-to-one support to several technology clients and allowed Medicine Hat College to kick-start a new technology co-op program.

The SEATS project, which also receives funding from the Government of Alberta, has enabled Community

Futures Entre-Corp to become an approved service provider to the province's Innovation Voucher Program. To date, seven businesses have been awarded vouchers including Accessible Accessories Ltd., a software company already participating in Community Futures Entre-Corp's Business First Incubator.

The Medicine Hat software developers – a husband and wife team – only needed a little support from the local Community Futures office. Today the company is responsible for supplying the web interface for the online accessory shops of numerous car dealers. They've also added five employees. "You don't even notice that it's not a GM or Ford site," said Sean Blewett, the General Manager of Community Futures

Entre-Corp.

Part of the impetus for the project, Blewett added, is the fact the technology sector tends to work with clients from outside the region, and doesn't have a strong local profile. As a result, companies have difficulty finding skilled employees. "There's a lot of demand from employers, but not a lot of young people are going into the technology programs," said Blewett. "They're used to the idea of just walking out of school into the oil and gas jobs."

So, in addition to the kind of training and office support the Community Futures program gives companies like Accessible Accessories, the project is also working with Medicine Hat College in the hope of convincing more students to pursue high-tech jobs.

### TOWARD A HEALTHY BUSINESS COMMUNITY

For a town that got its start in one of the dirtiest of industries — coal mining — Canmore has come a long way. Today, this picturesque southern Alberta town near Calgary is working hard to win the title of healthiest community in Canada.

"Healthy Canmore" is a fledgling project born out of the realization that the town had become a top destination for outdoor enthusiasts, who in turn were attracting large numbers of health and wellness practitioners to keep them in shape. Three years ago, a summit at the Silvertip Resort led to a loose alliance that is on the verge of becoming a formal organization this year.

The advantages of a trade association are well known, but it's not always a simple matter of convincing disparate interests to join forces. Canmore boasts dozens of health and wellness

professionals, but there are sometimes divisions between the conventional physicians and the alternative medicine practitioners.

"The biggest problem is these two sectors don't always talk to each other," said Jodie Eckert, Economic Development Coordinator for Community Futures Centre West, which is managing a \$198,000 grant from RDI to turn the Healthy Canmore vision into reality. "Instead of having everyone working alone and in their own silos, we're trying to have them come together."

Already, the "Canmore – A Community of Healthy Living and Wellbeing" project is finding success. After completing a study of the area's health and wellness sector in 2008, the second phase of assembling an alliance has already generated considerable positive publicity. So much so, said Eckert, that at

least one new practitioner has relocated to Canmore to take advantage of the cooperative business environment. "Everybody likes to come into a community that's going in the same direction," she said.

Among the project's goals is to see four new health and wellness businesses open by March of 2011. So far, Eckert reports, ten new businesses have signed on. They're also aiming for a two per cent increase in employment.

Helping draw new interest is the annual Canmore LifeFest, an industry expothat features workshops and showcases from a wide range of exhibitors, including everything from medical practitioners to massage therapists. The third expo was held on November 13, 2010, AM

# BUILDING A GATEWAY FOR FOREIGN BUSINESS

ALTHOUGH CENTREPORT CANADA, Winnipeg's new inland port, may still be in its infancy, it hasn't stopped businesses from across the country from wanting to take advantage of a unique opportunity.

From high-end agricultural products to windows, the list of candidate goods for shipment through CentrePort seems destined to be a long one. And that's without even trying. "We actually are not marketing ourselves right now because we've been focused on the foundational elements," said CentrePort

CEO Diane Gray. "At the same time, companies are coming to us. We're working with a dozen firms who are interested in working in Winnipeg."

CentrePort is a 20,000 acre transportation, trade, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and logistics centre near Winnipeg's James Armstrong Richardson International Airport. CentrePort will offer businesses two primary advantages. Using Canada's tax and duty advantages, exporters won't have to pay duties and tariffs until their products reach the consumer. "It's about easing cash flow management," explained Gray. Second, Winnipeg has few rivals when it comes to transportation options. No airport in Canada sees more dedicated daily cargo flights than Winnipeg's. Add to that three Class 1 rail carriers — CN, CP and Burlington Northern Santa Fe — and the options for moving goods are immense.

Those factors convinced a group of public- and private-sector organizations that met in the summer of 2008 to call for the creation of CentrePort. WD and the Province of Manitoba provided \$3.5 million in October 2009, for start-up and operations.

The next step, while fielding calls from those eager to get involved, is the servicing of the land required to host the port. Gray said some businesses are eager to take advantage of "single-window access" to the federal government's programs as soon as possible.

Gray and her colleagues are also wasting no time establishing relationships with other North American inland ports. In January 2010, federal, provincial, municipal and business leaders joined her team on a tour that included stops in Guanajuato, Mexico; Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas; Memphis, Tennessee; and Chicago, Illinois. AW

### COMMERCIALIZING TOP TECHNOLOGICAL IDEAS

FROM DESIGNER CROPS TO NUCLEAR engineering, Saskatchewan is growing its reputation as a technological innovator. However, these innovative ideas and products still have to make it to market.

"We've had some very advanced research," said Susan Gorges, the CEO of SpringBoard West Innovations. "But it is a fact that economic benefit only comes if those discoveries get into the marketplace."

A three year old, non-profit organization based in Regina with a mission of commercializing the province's best technological ideas, SpringBoard recently opened a second office in Saskatoon with \$3.3 million in support split equally between the provincial government and WD. The organization works with high-tech entrepreneurs to fine-tune products, business plans and marketing strategies. "They know how to run a lab and do research, but they

don't tend to be great business people," said Gorges. "That's where we come in."

The new Saskatoon office will work closely with the University of Saskatchewan, where many entrepreneurs do their early work. The goal is to give small- and medium-sized businesses some of the advantages typically available only to large corporations. The major players in communications technologies are revamping their product line every six months, pointed out Gorges, making it tough for start-ups to compete. "How do I slip a new product into that environment when Nokia or Motorola are doing that kind of thing every six months?"

But with SpringBoard's help, Saskatchewan is competing. Michel Fortin, CEO and President of Prevtec Microbia West, can testify to that. Thanks to assistance from SpringBoard's new Saskatoon office, his biotech firm is approaching the final stages of licensing for a trio of pig vaccines that will be produced in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Research Council. When approved, the vaccines could be providing work for as many as 20 staff in the province.

"We might have been able to do it all ourselves," said Fortin. "But without SpringBoard West, it would have taken a lot more time and it wouldn't have been at the same level as it is."

In all, SpringBoard has fielded more than 175 inquiries since it opened in 2007. As of March, it was working with 24 active clients. The new office brings its full-time staff to 10, including four innovation officers. Gorges said they are sometimes referred to as the "surround sound" team because of their multidisciplinary approach to advising clients.

# CAPITALIZING ON CLEAN TECHNOLOGY

WESTERN CANADA IS TAKING THE lead in the race to capitalize on clean technology, according to a new report on the industry in Canada. Not only are B.C. and the Prairies shedding their historic reliance on raw materials, but they are home to a disproportionately large share of firms developing or commercializing products and services that "reduce or eliminate environmental impacts."

The authors of the 2010 SDTC Cleantech Growth & Go-to-Market Report surveyed more than 400 Canadian firms. Among their findings was a convergence among the regions toward a stronger clean-tech sector. The West, in particular, is having no trouble matching national trends.

"There are more similarities than differences in terms of the makeup of the technology companies across the country, with the main take away being that companies grow faster if they shift their spending from R&D to sales and marketing when their product is ready for customers. We have to know when to stop polishing the technology and when to dig into the market and sell," said co-author Celine Bak of the Russell Mitchell Group, which produced the report in collaboration with Sustainable Development Technology Canada and the Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology Advancement.

Not only is each region embracing similar technologies, such as biofuels and clean-energy generation, but the relative contribution of each technology to the sector is quite similar across the country.

Where the regions did diverge, the West appears to be on the cutting-edge. In B.C., for example, there are at least 95 clean-tech companies, far more than would be expected based on the province's share of the national gross domestic product. Indeed, the two regions with the highest share of clean-tech companies compared with share of national GDP were B.C. and the Prairies.

Bak stated that the report is one of the first to provide a detailed picture of Canada's industry. "From the research, it is clear that the industry has what it takes to make an important contribution to the West's strategic energy, water, and greenhouse gas management plans," she said.

Encouraging better information sharing on the nature and performance of the industry is a key aim of the project. The report is available online at www.cleantechnologyreport2010.ca. A database of the companies that formed the basis for the report is at: www.cleantechnologyreport2010.ca/database.

### WESTERN CANADA'S AEROSPACE SECTOR SOARS AT THE FARNBOROUGH INTERNATIONAL AIR SHOW

SUPPORTING WESTERN CANADA'S aerospace and defense sector was the focus of Minister Yelich's attendance at the 2010 Farnborough International Air Show in the United Kingdom - the largest aerospace event of the year.

Over three days, the Minister played a direct role in advocating on behalf of western Canadian industry. She participated in key meetings with senior officials from global aerospace and defence companies that have significant Industrial and Regional Benefit (IRB) obligations in Canada, representing business opportunities for the western Canadian aerospace and defence industry. Minister Yelich also promoted the strength and success of western Canadian companies by joining Viking Air and Avcorp in two important announcements that will benefit the West.

The world-class Air Show attracted more than 120,000 trade visitors, with representation from 40 countries, and provided a great venue to promote Western Canada's competitive edge in the aerospace industry.

Western Canada's aerospace industry employs approximately 15,000 people, generates \$4 billion in annual revenues, and takes part in a wide range of both civil and defense aerospace activities. Strategic events like Farnborough are helping to ensure that western Canadian firms are well-positioned to compete for IRBs and global aerospace opportunities by showcasing their strengths on an international stage.



Minister Yelich at the Farnborough International Air Show this summer

## THE 2010 WINTER GAMES

The end of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games doesn't mean the benefits and opportunities spurred by the Games have ended. WD has been there to support the Games and its legacy in many ways, some of which include providing funding for Metro Vancouver Commerce to encourage foreign direct investment, showcasing French language and culture to the world, and by promoting fuel cell technology through the use of Whistler's hydrogen-powered buses.

### 2010 WINTER GAMES BRING A WORLD OF BUSINESS TO VANCOUVER

THE GAMES WERE A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR A REGION TO SELL ITSELF as business-friendly. With Vancouver's chance to play host to the world in 2010, nine of the municipalities that comprise the greater metropolitan area joined forces to take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the Games.

With the help of \$800,000 in WD support, Metro Vancouver Commerce, a consortium of the municipalities' economic development agencies, was able to help host 100 "investment-ready" senior executives representing 75 corporations from around the world, matching them with some 160 local businesses.

"It was really all about being able to deliver the message that Metro Vancouver is a very competitive place to do business," said the consortium's project manager, Jamie Hunter.

The invitees were selected from a list of 400 candidate companies from the green building, aviation, and digital media sectors, as well as other creative enterprises, such as the film industry.

The executives were set-up with a series of peer-to-peer activities including a tailored Games experience, whereby Western Canada's attractive business climate was showcased. Among the host partners were video-game maker Electronic Arts, biomass-to-gas innovator Nexterra, and Chrysalix, a venture capital firm specializing in the energy sector.

Evaluating the project's total success will take time. However, just 60 days after the end of the games, the project surpassed its \$20 million dollar goal, with Metro Vancouver Commerce announcing close to \$60 million in new international investment.





Top: Photo courtesy of @ VANOC/COVAN

Left: Man in Motion, Rick Hansen, gives Minister Yelich a tour of the Vancouver Olympic Village













Above: The hydrogen fuel cell powered illuminated rings shine silver after Team Canada wins another silver medal during the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver. Photo courtesy of Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association

### SHOWING OFF FUEL OF THE FUTURE AT THE 2010 WINTER GAMES

WHISTLER IS RENOWNED FOR ITS SKIING, HIKING, BIKING AND SPECTACULAR scenery. Less well known are the village's hydrogen-powered buses, the world's largest fleet. B.C.'s premier tourist village took full advantage of the Games to showcase this technology, which promises to play a major role in the global energy mix of the near future.

"We're just at the beginning of the innovation curve for this technology," said John Tak, President of the Canadian Hydrogen Fuel Cell Association. "Each year, companies are driving down costs and improving performance and durability."

Tak and fellow fuel cell advocates received some \$300,000 from WD to promote the technology during the Games. The fact that 20 of Whistler's 28 buses run on hydrogen fuel cells that produce zero carbon emissions gave them a head start.

But since Whistler was only home to half the events, organizers created a virtual fuel cell bus, filled with computer simulators and information, and installed it at the BC Pavilion on the fourth floor of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "People didn't have to go up to Whistler. They could sit and watch the scenery passing by right from there," said Tak.

The campaign included bus and SkyTrain advertisements and a demonstration fuel cell to power the 14-metre-tall illuminated rings floating in Coal Harbour. "We also made really good use of social media generating hits on our www.poweringnow.ca website," Tak said.

The vast majority of B.C.'s electricity is already produced at clean hydroelectric dams, making B.C. fuel cells among the greenest power sources in the world. "Even better," said Tak, "there are two chemical plants in North Vancouver that produce hydrogen as a byproduct. Today, the province is capturing that hydrogen and killing two birds with one very renewable stone."



Pascal Couchepin, Grand Témoin de la Francophonie for the 2010 Winter Games, and Minister James Moore welcome spectators at the official opening of Place de la Francophonie, a celebration of francophone art and culture which ran on Granville Island throughout the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

### B.C. DISPLAYS BILINGUAL SPIRIT AT THE 2010 WINTER GAMES

AMONG THE BENEFITS OF BEING ABLE to host the Games is the opportunity to share the country's national spirit with the rest of the world. In Canada's case, that means showcasing both official languages on the stage, along with the podium.

Quebec is often the province visitors think of when it comes to Francophone heritage. However, the rest of Canada is home to many thriving francophone communities from the historic Maillardville in British Columbia to St. Boniface in Manitoba. The Government of Canada wanted to ensure that the 2010 Winter Games would help showcase this richness and diversity to all those attending the Games.

And so WD provided \$500,000 in support, in collaboration with Canadian Heritage's \$1.2 million contribution,

for La Place de la Francophonie, a venue located on Vancouver's popular Granville Island. The space featured a daily program of francophone-related musical performances, exhibitions, trade shows and special events. At least 10,000 visitors passed through the market each day, according to Donald Cyr, Executive Director of the Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (SDECB). The SDECB, a non-profit organization which promotes Francophone business interests in the province, was at the forefront in working with WD and the Place de la Francophonie to give the Games a bilingual touch.

Musicians from across Canada performed, including Gregory Charles. Yelo Molo, Malajube and Éric Lapointe. Comedians Mike Ward, Rachid Badouri. and Louis-José Houde, among others, dazzled crowds with their clever punch lines and witty repertoires.

For those looking to take a break from the entertainment, WD in cooperation with *SDECB*, supported an agri-tourism showcase where producers could present a variety of food products and tourism experiences. Many a visitor was delighted to sample apple cider from Quebec and other authentic fare from across Canada.

La Place de la Francophonie's closing day was February 28th, 2010; however, the effect it had on promoting awareness and appreciation of French Canadian culture and business will live on in the memories of those who took part.

### THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

With Canada's Economic Action Plan (EAP), the Government of Canada aimed to counter the effects of the global recession and sustain Canada's economic advantage now and for the future.

Under EAP, WD is delivering the Community Adjustment Fund (CAF) and Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RInC) program in Western Canada. These two initiatives support EAP by creating jobs, upgrading community infrastructure and stimulating local economies across the West.

As of November 10, 2010, over \$187 million of CAF funding has been paid out to 314 approved projects across the west, with 47 projects fully completed. While at the same time, over \$61 million in RInC funding has been disbursed to 718 approved projects in Western Canada. To date, 233 of these RInC projects have been fully completed.

As WD continues to deliver these two programs, communities and industries most affected by the downturn are already seeing results of this plan in action. Businesses have begun hiring again, with the economy adding nearly 430,000 jobs since July 2009. For more information, visit: http://www.actionplan.gc.ca/

### PECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE CANADA (RINC) SUCCESS

### HOCKEYVILLE" GETS RENO FOR PRO TEAMS

WHEN KRAFT FOODS CHOSE TERRACE, B.C. as Canada's "Hockeyville" for 2009, the city knew it had a problem. The recognition that comes with starring in a CBC television reality program and hosting an NHL game was welcome, but something had to be done about the state of the city's 35 year-old Main Arena, of the Terrace Sportsplex.

"We ripped off the Main Arena's boards and took a look at the supports. All of them would have to be re-welded."

recalled Carmen Didier, the city's Leisure Services Director. In addition, the glass above the boards was short of the standard height of six feet.

The Kraft award came with \$100,000, but the required renovations to the Main Arena would cost twice that much. Within a few months, however, the shortfall had been covered. Among the new funding sources was over \$145,000 in RInC funding from WD.

The WD support also helped with upgrades to the adjacent Hidber Arena, which needed heated bleachers, acous-

tic panels and insulation to extend the facility's life and usability.

By the time the Vancouver Canucks and New York Islanders arrived for the big game in the Main Arena on September 14, 2009, new boards and glass were in place and the entire complex had been given a fresh coat of paint. The event attracted a capacity crowd of 1,100, plus another 6,000 watching on a giant television screen in the nearby George Little Park. The Canucks won, 2-1.



and the Carries have in the New York Islanders at the rendiated Main Arena of the Terrace Spurtspiew for Kraft Hockeyville 2009.

### MAKEOVER IMPROVES WILLIAM LUTSKY YMCA'S REPUTATION

Fitness clubs don't usually feature locker rooms in their promotional literature. Given the importance of first impressions, it's hard to exaggerate the importance of a clean and safe place to change and store one's gear.

YMCAs are no exception. In fact, pleasant locker rooms play a key role in the organization's welcoming reputation across North America, said Janet Tryhuba, General Manager of Relationship Development & Engagement for the YMCA in

Edmonton. "We were reviewing our member surveys that had some negative feedback," she recalled. An inspection showed a need for a complete makeover, including new drywall, floor and ceiling tiles, plumbing, and lights.

The cost of the over \$350,000 renovation was split equally among WD, the province and the YMCA operational budget. The WD support came through RInC.

Since the project's completion earlier this year, membership has already grown by 300, and the new locker room should be able to accommodate another 700 members.



#### CREATING SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES

The recreational options available in the Regional Municipality of Lawrence are about to become much more numerous.

These opportunities are thanks to a new \$600,000 community centre taking shape in front of the curling rink that for 50 years has served the municipality's 500 residents in and around Lawrence, an agricultural community some five hours drive northwest of Winnipeg.

As with many small towns in Canada, the rink has been a focal point for community life. But when construction on the new complex is complete – December 2010 is the target – residents will also be able to make use of a fitness facility, an outdoor skating rink, and a multi-purpose meeting hall. New office space will allow visiting doctors and accountants to examine patients and help with taxes respectively.

"This is something that's been discussed for ten years now," said building committee chair Walter Tymchuk. "Some of the existing facilities in this part of the country are getting kind of old."

The project took hold in early 2009, with over \$196,000 in funding from WD through the federal government's RInC program. The province's share is about \$115,000. As well, a fundraising commit-

tee has organized a series of monthly raffles, and the regional municipality is providing interim financing until the balance is raised. By December, it looks as though residents will be able to enjoy sporting activities both indoors and out.





Therea Rameda Motto - Istica tapsot inpeta



L to R (holding the EAP sign): MLA Greg Brkich, Minister Yelich, and Kenaston Mayor Dan O'Handley, with local residents at the Kenaston Pool.

#### **POOL MAKING WAVES**

Tots to teens are enjoying the upgrades to the Kenaston swimming pool. The improvements have resulted in a cleaner, healthier and safer environment for users—youth participating in swimming lessons, swim instructors, lifeguards, as well as recreational swimmers.

The 20 year old facility was showing its age but upgrades completed in winter 2009 have significantly improved its exterior appearance and the interior atmosphere. The new chlorination system ensures swimmers a healthy environment that meets provincial regulations. With a new roof, the leaks and associated musty odour, particularly in the dressing rooms, were eliminated. Replacing the exterior doors improved the security of the building at night and during off-season.

Staff find the new chlorination system more user friendly. They've also noticed a big improvement to the lighting and a reduction in the humidity with the new metal roof. "It used to be like a greenhouse in here," says Alex Jewell, pool manager. "The new chlorination system is so much easier to operate."

Mayor Dan O'Handley stressed the pool plays an important economic role, "People from Hanley, Bladworth or Hawarden drive to town for swimming lessons and stop to buy groceries." The incremental business generated by this recreational facility is essential to the vitality of Kenaston's business community.

The Government of Canada invested over \$6,500 to the upgrades of the pool through its Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RInC) program. The town and province contributed matching amounts, and the Kenaston Lions Club contributed \$9,900 for the roofing supplies.

### COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT FUND AT WORK

#### **FUELING THE FUTURE**

The big fuel tankers driving around on the city streets are usually all we see of the petroleum industry, other than the routine fill-up at our favourite local pumps. Seldom do we consider where the fuel comes from and what happens to the waste it generates.

Each year, Manitobans consume over 400 million litres of diesel fuel and generate over 12 million litres of waste motor oils. This waste motor oil is one of the largest sources of the potentially environmentally harmful bi-products motorists produce. Motor oil can be a serious contamination threat to water, and the burning of waste motor oil is a very high source of emissions.

Todd Habicht saw that as an opportunity when his grandfather proposed a project to turn waste oil into an ultra clean diesel product. Since 2005, Habicht has been developing a method and a company to refine waste hydrocarbons – including used motor oil, but also other industrial lubricants – into a pure diesel fuel. This summer his company, HD-Petroleum, opened its facility in southern Manitoba and is ramping up to handle a significant portion of the province's motor oil waste.

The housing for the complex, which will include the refinery itself and storage tanks, was built earlier this year with over \$479,000 in funding from WD. The WD support came through the Economic Action Plan's Community Adjustment Fund

"We are able to say that the capacity of the plant is much greater and we will be able to accommodate future growth in the market," said Habicht. He added that he fully expects to increase his staffing by adding second and third shifts in the future. Habicht is pleased that his end product is "100 per cent diesel fuel. It has no additives at all."

Part of the financing will help pay for start-up wages for the company's initial six - eight employees. Letters of intent from suppliers indicate HD-Petroleum could see about 100,000 litres of waste oil coming in each month. That will make it the largest used-oil-to-diesel recycling operation in the province.



Crews work to install the thermal reactor, which is the heart of the HD-Petroleum thermal cracking process.

### A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE SILVER SAGE COMMUNITY CORAL

Situated in the city of Brooks in southern Alberta, the Silver Sage Community Coral has served as an important agricultural complex for local community members and organizations since it was opened in 1997. Yet, there was still significant unfulfilled potential for the facility to play an even larger role in attracting greater numbers of visitors and events to the region, especially given its accessible location halfway between Calgary and Medicine Hat on Hwy. 1. The challenge was a limited amount of space at the existing facility.

With an investment of \$238,000 through the Community Adjustment Fund, combined with funding from the County of Newell No. 4 and an in-kind contribution from the Eastern Irrigation

District, the Silver Sage Community Coral has been able to add a multi-purpose building that can accommodate more year-round activities. From 4-H camps and horse and cattle shows to commercial trade and agricultural events, the venue has opened the door to more possibilities, with plans already underway to host a recreational and ATV show and social gatherings.

"Without that addition, they wouldn't even think of coming here," says the facility manager, Jonathan Drake.
"The new building makes the entire facility more accessible to a wider range of groups."

The new multi-purpose building, which opened this year after construction wrapped up in early March, provides a covered 80-by-100 foot winterized venue with improved lighting and extra space

for agricultural shows and events.

Development of the project created short-term construction jobs, and the goal is to add both a full-time and part-time position over the next year. But the real economic impact is being felt through the hosting of additional events and the ability for existing events to continue growing. The expected increase in visitors to the region could help provide a welcome boost to local merchants, restaurants and hotels.

If the reaction of the local community is any indication of the venue's coming success, the future is bright.

"Everyone who comes into the new building comments on what a great addition it has been," adds Jonathan Drake. "It allows events to run much more smoothly and efficiently."



:: kers process wood in a forest fire salvage program just outside of Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan.

#### FINDING VALUE IN BURNED FOREST

The fire that destroyed huge swaths of northern Saskatchewan forests two years ago was the last thing the region's already struggling forestry sector needed. But a burned forest still has some value for those willing to do the work.

The Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN) was willing. With \$1.5 million in assistance from WD, the PBCN was able to put together a salvage operation that turned the burned trees into the raw material for fence posts, building logs and saw logs. The logs were cut and peeled onsite and then sent out to facilities for treating. In the process, the PBCN's Mee-Toos Forest Products operation put 50 men to work for six months of the project with a second year of activity now underway.

"Those logs will only be good to use for a year or two after the burn," said PBCN Chief Darrell McCallum, adding that the project also helps clean out the forest.

Residents of three communities are employed in the salvage: Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows and Deschambault Lake, all of which have seen only sparse employment opportunities in recent years. "There's a lot of (mineral) exploration, but nothing

solid," said McCallum. Hydro-electric development is also in the works, but in the meantime, forestry salvage is proving the most reliable source of work for many members of the PBCN.

McCallum said project organizers are considering harvesting other forestry material from the burn and processing them into wood pellets for pellet stoves. The WD support came through the Community Adjustment Fund (CAF), one of two federal government programs delivered by the Department under Canada's Economic Action Plan.

### NEW EMS BUILDING A HOT ADDITION TO THE VILLAGE OF NAKUSP

After 80 years in service, the Village of Nakusp's firehall is being replaced. Small, rundown and inefficient, the aging facility has earned its retirement. The new emergency services centre, funded by WD, could not come a minute too soon, according to a village representative.

"The new facility is needed because the old fire hall, approaching 80 years old, is dilapidated and not large enough to house the equipment that we now have," said Bob Lafleur, on behalf of the Village's Mayor, Karen Hamling.

"The Volunteer Fire Department, Search and Rescue and BC Ambulance have been looking for new homes for years," he said. He went on to explain that some of the equipment is currently stored in other locations, thus delaying response time. Housing all services in one building will increase efficiency and accessibility.

"The benefit to the community is obviously better service, better location, and better coordination of emergency incidents, including an incident command centre that the Fire Service and the Provincial Emergency Program can access, with a back-up generator," Lafleur continued.

The new Emergency Response Centre will also be home to a regional training centre. Currently, all the training is completed elsewhere, costing the Village both money and resources. The Village will work with Selkirk College to provide training for 13 people under the first-ever local apprenticeship program.

The \$1,345,000 WD investment, under the Western portion of the Community Adjustment Fund (CAF), will also create 10 new full-time jobs and will sustain another 6 - 10 jobs through the hiring of local contractors in the community. Without this investment, the Village would not have been able to complete the construction of the new building.

The new facility is expected to open by year's end.

# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE REPRESENTING INTERESTS OF PRINTERS

DOMINATED BY SMALL OPERATIONS and run primarily by owner operators, the printing business in Canada is not well understood. In fact, it's a fiercely competitive industry, one characterized by rapid technological change.

"People not directly involved with printing take this industry for granted and don't know much about it," said Josh Ramsbottom, coordinator of the country's first and only Centre for Excellence in Print Media. The Centre, located at NorQuest College in Edmonton, was set up two years ago to help the printing industry do business more efficiently and competitively. WD helped with start-up funding of \$1.4 million, and it is stepping in this year with another \$897,000 to be spent over a two year period. The purpose of the Centre and the funding from WD is to enhance the competitiveness and productivity of the Western Canadian printing industry by providing a Western Canadian incubator for testing and implementing new technologies.

The new WD funds will allow the Centre — and the NorQuest students who train there — to keep current with a new industry-wide software standard known as JDF. Just as HTML allows web browsers to render pages accurately, JDF ensures documents are handled consistently by a variety

of printing systems. "We hope to be completely JDF-compliant by 2012," said Ramsbottom.

While keeping up to speed on the latest hardware and software is critical, the country's printers also need assistance looking out for their collective interests as an industry, something few print shops have the luxury to do. With the Canadian Printing Industry Association being based in Ontario, "having an entity in the western provinces that industry can turn to for help is really important," said Ramsbottom.

The Centre has been recognized by PrintAction Magazine as one of the top 101 events "that helped shape Canadian printing since the start of the century." Industry is also helping out the Centre. One of the world's leading printing management software producers, Avanti, recently donated \$185,000 worth of software to the Centre.

### MAKING NEW PRODUCTS FROM BEETLE-DAMAGED LOGS

ENCOURAGED BY A WARMING climate, the mountain pine beetle is taking its toll on the western Canadian forestry industry as it eats its way through millions of hectares of oncevaluable trees. Yet, the potential of these trees was not lost on a team at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC).

While pine beetle-damaged lodgepole pine logs are used for a variety of unique products and building uses, there had been little done with the bluehued milled wood chips. But it turns out that those wood chips, when mixed with Portland cement, make a superior synthetic wood product.

There is a market for wood chips within traditional industries like pulp and paper mills and the new bio-energy industry (pellet fuel). However, this new product provides an opportunity to derive higher economic value from beetle-damaged wood. That was the discovery UNBC graduate student Sorin Pasca made several years ago as part of his master's studies in ecosystem

science and management.

Now the task of convincing industry to embrace "Beetlecrete" as the building material of the future has been handed to Dr. Sungchul Choi and Dr. Alex Ng, professors in Marketing and Finance at UNBC. Their marketing research is funded in part by more than \$154,000 from WD.

"It's not a new idea. It's been done in Europe for almost a hundred years," said Ng. "What's new is using beetle-killed wood waste." But he wonders how industry and consumers will respond to that new idea. Moreover, will they accept it as a green building product?

So far, prototypes of Beetlecrete have found their way into countertops at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities headquarters in Victoria (a Gold LEED certified government building), the Ramada Hotel in Prince George, and a bench at UNBC. Other possible uses include floor and ceiling tiles, partition systems, and desks.

According to Ng, response elsewhere has been positive. "Until we took some

samples to some trade shows, it wasn't clear that it would be seen as a 'green' product," he said. But so far, said Ng, it has been accepted. Wood-concrete material is already produced and well received in a number of countries.



University of Northern British Columbia's Robert Van Adrichem shows the Honourable Jay Hill how the university is turning beetle-damaged wood into an economic opportunity

### RETROSPECTIVE



Construction of the new International Vaccine Centre (InterVac), which will improve VIDO's capacity to serve the country's medical needs.

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement no. 40063159

If undeliverable please return to:
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### WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH LAB BRANCHES OUT

WHEN CANADIANS FACED THE unknown threat posed by severe acute respiratory disease (SARS) in 2003, health officials turned to a consortium of research groups, including the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), for help. The non-profit research centre, based at the University of Saskatchewan, was a logical player in the race to find a vaccine. But the results of the consortium's work couldn't be tested at home. Instead, they were sent to the United States.

It was the same story with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad-cow disease. VIDO teams offered unparalleled research, but they had no capacity for testing vaccines or other intervention strategies. So again, a need was left unmet.

That shortcoming is scheduled to be a thing of past, said Dr. Andrew Potter, VIDO's director and CEO. The difference is a new \$140-million research complex to be known as the International Vaccine Centre. Construction and outfitting of InterVac, as its known, is nearing completion. It should be finished by the end of the year and open for business in early 2011. When it is, VIDO will grow from 160 staff and students to over 200. More importantly, it will include a biosafety level 3 containment facility, one that can accommodate not just lab mice, but animals as large as cattle.

"In order to take research right from square one to the end, you have to study the pathogen," said Potter. The level 3 rating allows researchers to handle tuberculosis, the SARS and West Nile viruses, and other pathogens that can be fatal to humans, and for which treatments are not known. This is second only to Level 4, which is designed for disease-causing organisms which are typically not normally seen in Canada and for which no adequate treatment

exists, such as the ebola virus. InterVac, "will make us the top institute in the world in our field in terms of capacity," said Potter.

Not that VIDO doesn't already enjoy a reputation for excellence. Thanks to the collaborative, interdisciplinary work environment fostered by the University of Saskatchewan – there is a veterinary college, an agricultural college and a medical school, all next door – VIDO has always been able to attract top people to its labs. "We've got one of everything," said Potter. "There's even a college of law, which is increasingly important in our field, and a school of public health, which draws on many other disciplines."

The new building - which has been in the works for six years is being funded with \$57 million from the province, \$250,000 from the city of Saskatoon, and \$49 million from the federal government - much of that in the form of support for capital costs and equipment from WD. The funding will make a big difference to VIDO's capacity to serve the country's medical needs, for both humans and animals. When it came to the most recent health threat to dominate the agenda, pandemic flu, the gap between what's needed and what's possible to do was frustratingly wide, Potter said. "We can do a little bit now, but not nearly what we want to be able to."

Ultimately, VIDO researchers are hoping to shift their focus from responding to public health threats as they arise to developing tools the medical community can use to anticipate and react to emerging viruses. Said Potter: "We can make some pretty good guesses as to what the threats may or may not be, but what we really need is the technological platform to able to act quickly in the face of new threats."

MAKING CANADA AN INNOVATION LEADER

HELPING COMMUNITIES IMPROVE RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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# ACCESSWEST

Winter 2012

CAI WE -A18

Industry-College Collaboration Lifts off in Manitoba

Red River College's Centre for Aerospace Technology and Training

SPECIAL INSERT:

Western Canada's Thriving Aerospace Sector



PROMOTING THE WEST ON THE WORLD STAGE Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français ISSN: 1495-6802 (print) ISSN: 1495-6543 (online)

Cover Photo: Flight Lieutenant Paul Heasman, 2 Qualified Flight Instructor at Royal Air Force Valley, shows Minister Yelich the ins and outs of the BAE Hawk Trainer, similar to the one used at the NATO Flying Training in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE LYNNE YELICH



The Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

As Canadians, we can be proud of our country's solid economic fundamentals. It is important to keep in mind, however, that Canada's future prosperity depends not just on meeting the challenges of today, but on building the dynamic economy that will create opportunities and better jobs for the future.

In order to meet the challenges of the past two years, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) invested in more than 1,000 projects across the West as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan, helping communities reduce the impacts of the economic downturn.

Looking ahead at the opportunities for tomorrow, WD's investments are helping western Canadian companies to compete at a global level and develop cutting-edge technologies for future commercialization. For example, WD is supporting the Toxicology Centre at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon to assess the commercial viability of a new technology that could contribute to cleaner, more economical oil sands extraction processes.

WD also helps small- and medium-sized enterprises improve productivity, get products to market, and expand global trade and investment opportunities. A WD investment is helping with the development and delivery of the Access to Supply Chains program, a two-year pan-western pilot project. This program assists women entrepreneurs access the resources they need to move their products and services to customers.

One of my key priorities is helping Western Canada maintain international competitiveness. This year, I attended the 2011 DSEi (Defence and Security Equipment International) Exhibition in London and Agritechnica 2011 in Hannover, Germany, where I met with multinational companies that have significant business interests in the western Canadian economy. I took the opportunity to tell them about our strong agriculture industry and the vibrant and growing western Canadian aerospace and defence sector.

I am confident that WD's range of programs and activities create a foundation that builds the prosperity and competitiveness of the West. Together, we are working to build a stronger West for a stronger Canada.



### WORLD CLASS RESEARCH FACILITY TO OPEN IN SASKATCHEWAN

The International Vaccine Centre (InterVac), o state-of-the-art vaccine research centre and one of the largest of its kind in the world, will be up and running at the University of Suskatoriewan in early 2017.

the research centre uses the most advanced technologies to develop vaccines against new \_ id re-emerging infectious diseases, including SACS, HIV and West Mile Virus, safely and mole quickly than ever before;

The Covernment of Canada, Including Western From the Diversification Canada, helped to fund the construction of this facility. The Canada condetion for innovation contributed additional tending.

Un September 16, 2011, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister Yelich participated the opening of the InterVac facility, noting that Canada is providing scientists with facilities and equipment to conduct groundbreaking assauch and protect the health of Canadians.

"This new facility will be a centre of excellence a eating jobs for highly skilled researchers, apportunities for training for students and building on our international profile as a leader in public health," the Prime Minister said

InterVac will significantly enhance Canada's capacity to develop vaccines for both humans and animals, helping to ensure that Canada remains a leader in global research.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper opens world class research facility.

# ENSURING THE QUALITY OF CANADIAN WHEAT



An SRC scientist analyzes DNA in the lab.

One grain of wheat looks much like the next to the untrained eye. Yet nothing could be further from the truth, given the variety of grains grown on Canadian farms. In fact, even the trained eye isn't always able to tell them all apart.

But thanks to a quirk of the genetic code called single nucleotide polymorphisms, or SNPs, tests of wheat DNA are able to distinguish wheat grown for bread from varieties destined for pasta. And new developments in the technology used in these tests promise to overhaul Canada's wheat inspection process, giving farmers a competitive edge in a global market that demands quality guarantees.

That's the plan laid out by the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC). Thanks to WD funding and an investment from Enterprise Saskatchewan, the SRC is developing DNA tests that promise to identify varieties of wheat passing through the supply chain. They hope such tests will assume the role once played by visual inspection, which was phased out in 2008.

The problem with visual inspection was that several varieties of grain exist within a particular class of wheat that can look virtually identical to others but are genetically diverse. In the past, said the SRC

Project Leader Kimberly Bryce, "they had to look a particular way to be registered. Now they don't have to."

"Our Government is delivering real results for Canadian farmers by investing in innovative research and new technologies that will help increase their profitability," said Brad Trost, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Humboldt, on behalf of Minister Yelich.

While DNA testing does exist today, it generally takes many days to conduct and obtain the information. "By the time the results are back, a shipment may be halfway across the ocean," Bryce said. Industry has indicated that a new technology is needed that can authenticate a load of grain in a short time frame.

For the time being, producers are simply signing declarations as to the purity and quality of the product they sell. Ideally, said Bryce, "grain companies and farmers want verification that the right kind of grain has been delivered to the elevator."

### PROMOTING NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR

As the owner of a small business in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Regan Grimwood knew it wouldn't be easy staying on top of technological trends. "There are always bigger and better machines that can do the job faster. If you don't keep up, you'll end up as just another backyard operation," said the cabinet-maker.

Grimwood's company, RGG Woodcrafters, is one of dozens across the West that have managed to keep up with those trends, thanks to FPInnovations, a non-profit knowledge-transfer institute devoted to the forest products industry. More than \$2 million in new funding for its outreach programs means a growing list of firms in Alberta and Saskatchewan are following suit. "They make you feel like you're already part of the market with them at your back,' Grimwood said of FPInnovations's team.

FPInnovations's mission is to provide "technical expertise, market intelligence, anything that advances competitiveness and reduces cost," said Roland Baumeister, manager of the institute's secondary manufacturing department. For a nominal membership fee, small and medium-sized businesses get access to training and knowledge that is typically beyond their modest budgets.

Most firms are interested in the latest breakthroughs in technology, and FP supplies that kind of intelligence. But as Zavisha Sawmills (a family-owned operation in Hines Creek, Alberta) discovered, FP's management-specific advice is applicable to primary industries as well. "Even without the aid of new technologies, we've proved that there can be improvements, and

efficiencies can be achieved," said owner Ashley Zavisha.

FPInnovations has taken more than 100 calls from Alberta and Saskatchewan firms seeking assistance and held several workshops, according to Baumeister. The firms range from five-person shops to 500-person operations. The one thing they have in common, besides a business plan centered on adding value to wood products, is the need to keep up with a changing marketplace.

"It's all about finding solutions to the needs of industry at a specific point in time," said Baumeister. "We're not trying to build lasting business relationships. We provide shortterm knowledge boosts so companies don't need our help anymore."

### MAKING CANADA AN INNOVATION LEADER

In an effort to target promising students from abroad, Mitacs Inc., a national non-profit organization headquartered at the University of British Columbia which offers unique research and training programs, has expanded its successful 'Globalink' student internship program.

WD, which supported the program's initial pilot project, has made an additional investment to expand the program, strengthen Canada's international linkages, promote its educational institutions, and help maintain BC's leadership in leading edge scientific research.

More than 1.100 potential students have applied for 2011, and the program has expanded to China and Brazil. In addition, Globalink has expanded beyond the physical sciences and engineering, adding scholarships in the social sciences and humanities.

Globalink is intended to help make Canada a leader in innovation, which requires its universities to make aggressive commitments to research and higher education.

In conceiving the original pilot project, Arvind Gupta, Scientific Director and Chief Executive Officer of Mitacs, said that post-secondary institutions needed to attract the highest possible talent. "We had transformed ourselves as a place to learn, but we weren't producing the number of innovation leaders that we should. Those that we were producing were leaving the country."

For Gupta and his colleagues at Mitacs, one possible solution was to target promising students in countries like India, where both the economy and student population are growing rapidly, and where other recruiters are aggressively courting graduates.

The new tactic involved contacting students while they were still junior undergrads.

That first year, Globalink found 17 students in India interested in studying in BC. It wasn't easy. "If you only knew the stops we pulled out to let these students come over to us instead of Microsoft in the US." said Gupta.

Last year, the program drew 600 applications and placed 49 students in BC schools. "The buzz in India is this is the program you want to get into," said Gupta.

As the program expands, it will aim to bring the world's top student talent to Canada, hopefully for the long term – a recent survey suggests that 85 percent of participants are interested in remaining in the country for graduate work because they enjoyed the program and liked the lifestyle that Canada has to offer.

# TAKING 3D TO NEW DIMENSIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Canadian-based film and television production is one of the country's key economic sectors. In 2009/2010 alone, the total volume of production in Canada totaled \$4.9 billion. The industry employs an estimated 117,200 individuals on a fulltime basis, including 46,100 jobs directly in film and television production, and a further 71,100 spin-off jobs in other industries in the Canadian economy.

British Columbia, often called "Hollywood North", has long been a favorite location for shooting both Canadian and American television series and movies. Companies in the province have previously been involved in the production of some 3D films, but the technology was invariably imported and handled by teams from the United States and overseas. To keep the industry strong and growing, WD has made investments to ensure that Canadians have the opportunity to train with the latest technology and compete in this growing field.

At Capilano University's Nat and Flora Bosa Centre for Film and Animation, WD funding has helped to purchase stereoscopic three dimensional (S3D) equipment, including cameras, monitors, two S3D camera rigs, and other supporting technology for the centre. The University will teach students to use S3D technology and offer opportunities for those currently employed in the BC film industry to upgrade their skills.

"Digital S3D is the leading-edge technology in cinematography and it is important that the western Canadian entertainment industry and institutions are equipped to take advantage of the arising opportunities," said Minister Yelich. "Digital technology, including 3D for animation and gaming, is the

Stereoscopic 3D, or S3D, technology goes beyond the simple animated images that can be rotated on a conventional flat screen. Instead, it generates genuinely three-dimensional films viewable with special glasses.

future of the entertainment industry. As a result of this initiative, BC will strengthen its position as a premier destination for film production."

"We're absolutely delighted that Western Economic Diversification Canada has recognized the value of investing in our spectacular new Bosa Centre, which will ensure that students and industry workers are



Minister Yelich becomes one of the first Canadian federal politicians filmed in 3D.

provided with the necessary tools for creating excellence in their productions," said Capilano University's President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Kris Bulcroft.

At the Emily Carr University of Art and Design (ECU), filmmakers, faculty, graduate students and undergraduates now have access to some of the most advanced technology the film industry has to offer, including digital, live-action motion capture equipment. WD's investment helped the university to purchase equipment and develop the first western Stereoscopic 3D (S3D) Centre of Excellence in digital media and film technologies.

The Stereoscopic 3D Centre of Excellence opened its doors early in 2010 as part of the university's Intersections Digital Studios. WD's investment helped put the BC film industry at the leading edge of training and applied research in production and post-production for S3D technology. "The fact that our equipment is now available for filmmakers has been a boon to the local industry," said Maria Lantin, Director of Intersections Digital Studios.

"British Columbia has a vibrant filmmaking environment and this investment provided the necessary resources for this industry to remain competitive in the West," explained Minister Yelich.

What really puts the university at the leading edge, however, is the potential of linking full body movement with stereoscopic line drawing. Through a partnership with Janro Imaging Laboratory, the S3D Centre is enhancing Janro's flagship freehand stereoscopic drawing tool to take input from a motion capture system. "We are excited about the new aesthetic exploration that can happen with a fully embodied drawing experience," Lantin added.

Profile 2010: An Economic Report on the Screen-based Production Industry in Canada. Produced by the Canadian Media Production Association, in collaboration with the Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Retrieved from: http://www.cftpa.ca/newsroom/pdf/profile/Profile2010Eng.pdf

### NEW TOOLS ADDRESSING KEY MEDICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Mapping the molecular mechanisms and chemical pathways involved in transmitting signals from one nerve cell to another poses one of the most daunting technical challenges in medical research. But new tools are helping bring scientists at the University of Calgary's Hotchkiss Brain Institute (HBI) closer to answering some of these challenges.

The arrival of new microscopes that offer ultra-fine resolution of living tissue promises to shed light, figurative and literally, on what goes wrong when nerves are damaged by disease or trauma and how they might be restored. "You can actually see nerves regrowing and

reconnecting to muscles," said Dr. Doug Zuchodne, Principal Investigator for the Peripheral Nerve Research Laboratory at the HBI Regenerative Unit in Neurobiology (RUN).

The new tools are only now beginning to produce results. For Zuchodne, however, they are proving invaluable as his team works on uncovering clues about how to treat such diseases as multiple sclerosis and diabetes. spinal cord injuries, and other conditions in which neurons no longer communicate properly with each other.

In addition to the microscopes, a major renovation of the RUN labs is underway. Researchers will soon have sound- and light-proof labs, along with the latest in tissue culture facilities.

The HBI was set up seven years ago with a Canada Foundation for Innovation grant and a donation from Calgary's Hotchkiss family. Prior to becoming the HBI in 2004, the organization had been known as the Calgary Brain Institute for 30 years. It has since assembled a world-class team of researchers. often collaborating with researchers in labs around the world doing work on similar lines of inquiry.

### INDUSTRY-COLLEGE COLLABORATION LIFTS OFF

A groundbreaking partnership between Winnipeg's Red River College and one of the world's leading aerospace manufacturers has taken the concept of work-study programs to a new level.

The college's Centre for Aerospace Technology and Training (CATT) doesn't just work closely with Standard Aerospace's Winnipeg operations. it's located right on the international company's campus. That makes the partnership, created and equipped with support from WD and the Province of Manitoba, unique in Canada, and one of only a handful of similar arrangements in North America.

"Our Government wants Manitoba to maintain and expand its position in aerospace markets," said Minister Yelich. "We are providing the necessary equipment needed so students and industry can begin training, researching and developing key technologies at the centre."

"It gives us an opportunity to put students in an environment where they can see new and emerging technologies, and work there as industrial interns," said Fred Doern, Chair of the college's Mechanical, Manufacturing and Communications program. "Plus, it's been a

showcase for the latest in welding technologies."

Among those emerging technologies that students and Standard Aerospace are sharing are new lasers for cutting, joining and cladding aircraft parts. There's also a 3D X-ray camera that can analyze the strength of welded joints using the same technology at work in CAT scanners used by hospitals.

Maintaining that kind of gear can be challenging for a conventional college program; but not for Standard Aerospace. "When you're located in an industrial environment, you get much better use of the equipment. In our classrooms, they wouldn't get the same kind of care and attention and support, or get optimal performance," said Doern. Then there's the advantages students get from learning under practising professionals. "Our instructors sometimes serve as coaches. The subject material experts at Standard Aerospace supply the instruction."

Standard Aerospace is more than pleased with how the partnership is working out, according to Melanie Mulder, a Process Engineering Manager who works closely with CATT. "We consider it an

incubator of technology that gives us a chance to learn and understand the potential for future applications," she said. "And we get to know the students before they graduate."

Standard isn't the only destination for CATT graduates looking for work, however, as Manitoba's aerospace sector is one of the strongest in the country and students have gone on to work with small- and medium-sized businesses across the province. Doern explains that more than 80 welding and mechanical technology students have already been through CATT, helping to meet the high demand for a skilled workforce in this industry.



An instructor at Red River College's Stevenson Aviation and Aerospace Training Centre demonstrates ultrasonic nondestructive testing on a composite part for Minister Yelich as an Aircraft Maintenance student looks on.

# THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

Through Canada's Economic Action Plan (EAP), the Government of Canada took direct action to create lobs and protect Canadians during the olphal economic recession.

Index the EAP, WD invested in more than 1,000 projects across he West. Through the Community Allyustment Fund (CAF), WD relped communities reduce the short-term impacts of the economic downturn. Through the Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RInC) program, WD has provided funding for the construction or improvement of recreational facilities in communities across the West.

As the first phase of the EAP winds down, Access West is profiling CAF and RInC projects from across the West to demonstrate how investments made by WD continue to benefit western Canadians through a legacy of modernized infrastructure, economic development and enhanced skills training.

For more information, please visit: www.actionplan.gc.ca



Members of the Alberni Athletic Association unveil the facility's new hand-carved wooden sign.

# HELPING A COMMUNITY FROM THE GROUND UP

In 2009, Port Alberni lost its beloved community hall and athletic centre to a fire. For a city that was already feeling the effects of the downturn in the forestry sector, it was a crushing loss. The community wasn't prepared to shoulder the cost of building a new complex. But through the RInC program, WD provided an investment that would finance much of the new construction.

"Investing in the Alberni Athletic Hall reconstruction project ensured that this community would have access to the essential infrastructure they need today and in the future," said James Lunney, Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Alberni, on behalf of Minister Yelich.

The association came up with a plan for a 1,532-square-metre steel building. The thought of doing without a community hall mobilized the town, and the donations poured in. Larry Spencer, Director of the Alberni Athletics Association, estimates the most recent tally at \$400,000 in cash and in-kind services, in addition to the RInC funds provided by WD and other government assistance.

Today, Port Alberni is home to a new hall that allows residents and visitors to participate once again in a variety of indoor recreational activities. The building features a gymnasium, sports courts and an indoor archery range, as well as new change rooms and bleachers. The complex hosts basketball tournaments, chamber of commerce meetings and First Nations potlatches, all activities that are helping renew Port Alberni's community spirit.



Dr. James Lunney, Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Alberni, announces funding for the new Alberni Athletic Hall. The original sign serves as his backdrop.

### TRAINING FOR THE TRADES

In Saskatoon, much of the training at the Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre used to occur outside. But that's now changed with the construction of a new training facility for trades.

In 2009, WD provided CAF funding to support the construction of the facility, which was supplemented by an investment from the Province of Saskatchewan. The new centre is strengthening economic opportunities in the province by providing students with the skills necessary for a range of employers.

"Our Government took action to ensure our communities emerged from challenging economic times more prosperous and stronger than ever," said Kelly Block, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggar, on behalf of Minister Yelich. "This facility is equipping our youth with valuable skills, assisting trade sectors in Saskatchewan to meet labour shortages, and acting to improve our region's economic growth."

The new facility supports training in the mining, manufacturing and construction sectors, providing training for over 325 students per year. Combined with a new suite of training equipment for drywalling, masonry, painting, carpentry and other trades, the centre "can now offer programs to meet the needs of most employers," said Donavon Elliott, the centre's manager.

The 780-square-metre building opened for business last summer with 270 students. "All the programs are proving popular." said Elliott.

The centre develops programs that are relevant and immediately applicable on the job. Customized training courses provide a basic understanding of tools and equipment used on the job, terminology, common safety issues and practices, and other components needed to prepare employees to begin contributing right away in the workplace.



WD provided CAF funding to the Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre for the construction of an educational training facility for trades such as masonry, culinary arts and early childhood education. The facility addresses the needs of Saskatoon and area employers for skilled workers and prepares youth and adults for employment and career opportunities in the trades.



Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggar MP Kelly Block (far right) joins Saskatchewan Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration Rob Norris (far left), students and other dignitaries to cut the ribbon on the Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre.

### EQUIPMENT UPGRADE ESSENTIAL TO COMPANY'S VIABILITY

For years, Thompson, Manitoba's 49-year-old Prendiville Industries' woodworking plant had a strong hold on the market for the wooden frames used by the local mining industry to refine zinc. However, by the summer of 2010, the company was beginning to realize that its manufacturing processes could benefit from greater efficiencies.

As a first step, the company investigated replacing the manual router employees used to cut the frames. By winter, the router had been replaced with a single computernumeric-controlled (CNC) model, essentially a robot that makes cuts faster and more precisely.

The router, purchased with a repayable loan from WD through the CAF program, is essentially the same kind of tool used by a

craftsman, only three or four metres longer, bolted to the floor, and controlled by

"We were able to do it before, but it was inefficient," said Ken Stovel, Chief Financial Officer for Prendiville Industries. "Now we're able to make a wider range of products for the mining industry."

The company hired one new operator and trained another two people to use the router. "The router's arrival is the kind of modern infrastructure the company needs to become more competitive in a growing market." said Stovel.

"These kinds of projects will not only create jobs in our communities, but they also help pave the way for Canada's future growth and prosperity," said Minister Yelich.

In addition to the Thompson operation, Prendiville supplies wood products for the mining and construction industries from plants in Winnipeg and Neepawa, Manitoba, and Kenora, Ontario.



The arrival of this Computer Numeric Controlled Router at Prendiville Industries in Thompson, Manitoba saved the jobs of more than 35 employees by keeping the company in the game.

### ENHANCING RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Winnipeg is making significant improvements to its recreational infrastructure, with numerous enhancements and upgrades being completed to parks and facilities throughout the city with the help of WD and RInC funding delivered to the city.

These funds allowed improvements at various soccer fields, athletic parks, and at Assiniboine Park, the city's premier open space, which has seen a number of enhancements and is now home to a new 'Nature Playground,' as well as an enlargement of the duck pond that serves as a summer gathering spot and winter skating rink.

In addition, the North Centennial Recreation and Leisure Facility, commissioned 25 years ago as a municipal swimming pool, now has a fully equipped gymnasium, fitness centre, multipurpose art room and teaching kitchen. "And it's entirely accessible, including all of

the fitness equipment and even the pool has a wheelchair ramp," said Dan Prokopchuk, Manager of Community Development and Recreation Services for the City of Winnipeg.

Residents have never had anything comparable open to them until now, he added. "It's the first of its kind in the North End. This really has filled a need for recreation in the

community. The latest usage figures show more than 800 people per day, as well as several schools and community organizations, taking advantage of it."

These improvements will strengthen the local economy and help ensure that quality facilities exist for residents and athletes of all ages and levels to enjoy.



The grand opening of Assiniboine Park upgrades (L-R: Margaret Redmond, President and CEO of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy Inc.; Hartley Richardson, Chair of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy Inc.; Mayor Sam Katz; the Honourable Stephen Fletcher, Minister of State for Transport).

### RENOVATIONS BRINGING BIG EVENTS TO SASKATOON



All the pieces of the puzzle are in place. Thanks to an earlier expansion and recent renovations to its trade centre - Prairieland Park – Saskatoon is now able to attract major conferences, helping strengthen economic opportunities of benefit to the municipality and the citizens of Saskatchewan at large.

"Prairieland Park continues to branch out and attract more national and international visitors every year. I'm proud our Government was able to assist them as they expand and bring more business and investment to our province," said Minister Yelich.

The facility now offers five breakout rooms equipped with the latest audio and video conferencing technology, which allows it to handle more simultaneous events and appeal to a broader clientele. Prairieland can accommodate upwards of 5,000 people at events ranging from Christmas concerts to professional meetings, all under one roof.

Mark Regier, Chief Executive Officer for Prairieland Park, said the venue used to face a significant challenge hosting large events but thanks to major improvements, "we will now be able to handle more people."

Upgrades to the halls included the demolition of existing walls and installation of new energy efficient power and lighting fixtures, new air and heating systems, new walls, ceilings and flooring, new audio and visual systems, and new washrooms.

Since the renovation project wrapped up in the fall of 2010, trade show activity has already increased, said Regier. "We've been at this for a couple of decades, and now we can finally compete at the top level."

Regier said that thanks to the renovations, the facility will be better equipped to provide for both large and small gatherings. "Private sessions are a 'huge component' of the business," said Regier, "and we just didn't have that ability before."

Minister Yelich and Prairieland Park CEO Mark Regier celebrate the completion of the renovations at the trade and convention centre.

### GAINING ACCESS TO LARGER MARKETS

Across the West, female entrepreneurs are developing quality products that have the potential to be marketed abroad but face challenges in reaching the right networks and markets. Help towards bridging this gap. which will enable women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, is coming from the Women's Enterprise Initiative (WEI).

The WD-funded network, which has resource centres in each of the four western provinces. is half-way through a two-year pilot project charged with helping established businesses expand into larger markets.

The Access to Supply Chains project has already seen women sign more than \$850,000 in new deals through the "Connecting for Contracts" program (C2C) according to Program Manager Marcela Mandeville.

Mandeville, who is also Chief Operating Officer for Alberta Women Entrepreneurs. the Edmonton-based organization that administers the program in Alberta, said many major retailers are very interested in doing business with Canadian women. "They are quite happy with the level of innovation. professionalism and the ideas that Canadian women bring to the table."

This lune, for example, Mandeville led a delegation of women entrepreneurs to the annual Women in Business conference in Las Vegas, the largest gathering of its kind in North America. There, she said, the Canadians were greeted warmly by prospective buyers from Walmart, Walgreens, Pfizer, Johnson and Johnson, and Home Depot, plus Shell and other petroleum firms, among others.

Most of the women participating in the program have a fair degree of experience running a company and are looking to expand their businesses. However, said Mandeville, there are also relative newcomers "who are savvy, who have been around for only a year or so, but have accomplished much."

In addition to helping establish networks between buyers and sellers, the C2C program also offers a certification service, which quarantees that businesses are run by women and where at least 51 per cent of the business is owned by women. So far, about 40 businesses have been certified. said Mandeville.

A third component involves the hosting of a series of business-growth workshops and conferences throughout the region, in order to help women develop their own peer-topeer networks and connect with the businesses that will help them succeed in today's competitive marketplace.

### MANITOBA FILM AND TV PRODUCTION COMPANIES TAKE ON THE WORLD

Recognized as the fourth largest film production centre in Canada after Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, Winnipeg's screen-based industry, led by On Screen Manitoba, is pushing its way onto the world stage. Last year, four national and international television drama series were shot in Winnipeg, highlighting the competitiveness of Manitoba producers.

This recent success is at least partially due to an investment from WD and the Province of Manitoba to help even more companies seize a share of attractive national and international projects.

The funding supports the Access Project, an economic development strategy that helps Manitoba production companies adapt to new technology, address emerging skill requirements and thus improve their competitiveness in global markets.

"Our Government recognizes the importance of Manitoba's screen-based industry and we are proud to support their continued development," said the Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety and Member of Parliament for Provencher, on behalf of Minister Yelich. "This funding helps On Screen Manitoba expand the Manitoba screen-based industry and create jobs, while

showcasing our province as a premier film production destination."

"The industry is in a period of rapid transition as digital technology is affecting the entire value chain from production, marketing and distribution to financing structures," said On Screen Manitoba Executive Director Nicole Matiation. "The Access Project allows us to provide professional, business and market development opportunities to Manitoba production companies."

"The project has also allowed On Screen Manitoba to expand our services for

### BUILDING ON SASKATCHEWAN'S EXPORT ECONOMY

Saskatchewan is rapidly becoming known as an economic powerhouse, providing \$12 billion in goods and services domestically and exporting another \$24 billion internationally.

As impressive as these numbers are, the team that runs the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP) is convinced the business community can do even better. And funds from WD are helping the Partnership find a wav.

Last year, WD provided STEP – a privately-led non-profit corporation – with funding for a project geared to increasing the number of export-ready companies in Saskatchewan by 15 percent. The funding is allowing Saskatchewan firms to create more employment, access greater exporting opportunities, and ultimately grow their business.

"By working with small- and medium-sized businesses in Saskatchewan, this project helped our economy grow and created new jobs," said Minister Yelich.

STEP used the WD funds to assist at least 60. more companies become exporters by 2012. "We looked at companies that were doing well within a 50-kilometre radius, and then asked if they could do well in a market with a radius of 500 to 5,000 kilometres," said STEP's President and CEO, Lionel LaBelle. "We want to turn 20 new companies into exporters each year."

So far, STEP is ahead of schedule. After 113 consultations with small and medium-sized firms, 38 firms have had their books reviewed and 22 have already made the transition to exporting their goods and services. "We've been in every one of the major cities, meeting with chambers of commerce and a broad cross-section of people," said LaBelle.

The companies involved work in the manufacturing, mining and agricultural sectors, including food processors in both the organic and conventional markets. If the next two years see similar progress. the team should be able to report meeting its target.

The guiding principle of the project is for STEP to serve as a knowledge broker and mentor for Saskatchewan businesses, helping them, as LaBelle points out, to find ways to export their products and services outside the province. "Our role is to show that they do have the capacity to take on the world."

### THE NEXT STEPS

WD has continued to assist STEP by supporting the presence of western Canadian agricultural machinery manufacturers at Agritechnica, an international agricultural machinery exhibition in Hannover, Germany, November 13-19, 2011. STEP collaborated with the Manitoba Trade & Investment Corporation, who also received support from WD, to ensure the complementary pavilions branded Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Western Canada as a leader in agricultural equipment manufacturing and innovation, as well as increased awareness of western agricultural machinery companies and helped them expand their participation in global markets by increasing their equipment exports.

Francophone and Aboriginal writers, directors and producers," she added. "This is making the entire industry more aware of the diversity of local talent."

Louis Paquin, who co-founded Rivard Productions 15 years ago, said the assistance On Screen Manitoba can now provide has given the industry a critical degree of respect and credibility. "Now we have a champion," Paguin said.

Film and TV production has a major impact on Manitoba's economy, and so does On Screen Manitoba, said Phyllis Laing, On Screen Manitoba Chair, and Executive Producer of Buffalo Gal Pictures.

"Our market development initiatives resulted in nine distinct production projects coming to Manitoba, with total production value of more than \$14.6 million and at least \$5.6 million spent here," Phyllis said.

There are over 30 active production companies in the province, which together are responsible for some 1,500 jobs each year.

New Don Cherry film in production, Keep Your Head Up Kid: The Sequel. The photo is of the Hockey Night in Canada set, constructed in the Stonewall Manitoba Curling Rink.



### NETWORKING KEY FOR INDUSTRIAL AND REGIONAL BENEFITS (IRB) SUCCESS

Last fall, potential prime contractors and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) gathered at a conference in Saskatoon to be briefed by government representatives and to learn about one another's services.

Organized by WD and Enterprise Saskatchewan, the event was attended by 55 western Canadian companies and some of the prime and tier one contractors.

For their part, the prime contractors expressed satisfaction with the business-tobusiness meetings and welcomed the chance to make site visits after the event to the iocations of some of the supplier companies, which familiarized them with the kind of support companies in the West could provide on major projects.

Among the area companies that hosted site visits the day after the conference were SED Systems, a Saskatoon communications technology business that provides test systems and contract manufacturing services to prime contractors and equipment manufacturers; Dumur Industries, a metal fabricator based in White City; and Dynalndustrial Inc., which specializes in industrial hard chroming, custom machining. and hydraulic cylinder rebuilding and has locations in Regina and Saskatoon.

Many of the companies in attendance were particularly appreciative of the chance to learn more about the federal Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) policy. The IRB policy requires winning bidders of major defence contracts to make investments in the Canadian economy in the amount equal to

the contract value. It was designed to maximize the domestic economic stimulus of the contracts while giving contractors flexibility in sourcing materials and services.

The event hosted presentations by eight prime and tier one contractors: The Boeing Company, BAE Systems plc, Dew Engineering & Development ULC, General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada, The Thales Group, SNC-Lavalin Group Inc., Force Protection, Inc. and Textron Marine & Land Systems.

The Saskatoon meeting followed other similar industry events in British Columbia and Alberta. At each event, western-based companies welcomed the opportunity to acquire first-hand information about the complex IRB process and the standards required to be a supplier.



Minister Yelich examines the cockpit of the Lockheed Martin CC-130J Hercules. Procurement of the CC-130J has resulted in several Western companies receiving in-service support contracts on this platform, including Cascade Aerospace, NGRAIN, and StandardAero.



### PROMOTING THE WEST ON THE WORLD STAGE

The International Paris Air Show is one of the world's largest trade shows for aerospace equipment and technology. In June 2011, the West was well represented at the air show, thanks in part to the efforts of WD.

"The International Paris Air Show is an excellent venue to promote Western Canada's vibrant and growing aerospace sector," said Minister Yelich. "Our Government is proud to support this sector, which continues to excel in research and development, technology and innovation on the world stage."

Minister Yelich traveled to Paris to meet with senior officials from several prime contractors who have IRB obligations that could be fulfilled in Western Canada. As well, Minister Yelich was the keynote speaker for the Government of Canada at the F-35 Networking Session, which was organized by the Government of Canada and the Aerospace

Industries Association of Canada. The session was attended by senior representatives from Lockheed Martin. The event provided western Canadian companies and organizations with the opportunity to meet with key decision makers on the F-35 program.

An important element of WD's economic diversification efforts is to promote and connect western Canadian industry to international aerospace and defense contractors with IRB obligations.

In all, organizers estimated that the 2011 Air Show drew more than 2,100 international exhibitors from 45 countries, displaying their products and services for 151,500 trade visitors and 204,000 public visitors.

The association and government representatives seek to ensure that the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), or the large companies that subcontract work on their orders, are knowledgeable of the capabilities in the aerospace sector in Western Canada.

The western Canadian aerospace and defence industry is a competitive, vibrant and growing sector that supports the employment of about 27,000 people, generates over \$4.5 billion in annual revenues and contributes more than \$2.5 billion to Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Minister Yelich talks with a representative from ASCO Aerospace Canada Ltd. (ASCO), which is manufacturing the F-35 ISF bulkhead for Lockheed Martin.

### MAKING STRONGER COMPONENTS FROM COMPOSITES

In the West, a consortium of major aerospace companies and small- to medium-sized enterprises are working with composite materials to make airplane components stronger and lighter, which in turn make the aircraft more efficient.

That's the hope of the Canadian Composites Manufacturing Research and Development consortium (CCMRD), which opened for business in April 2010.

"Our first project was looking at 'co-process' development," explained Michael Hudek, Executive Director of the CCMRD. "The intent is to reduce the manufacturing time and labour content and overall costs of manufacturing highly integrated composite structures, which we are trying to do by combining multiple processes together that otherwise would be done in a series. That is the main thrust."

Although it's early, the CCMRD hopes this project will lead to the adoption of these new processes by industry. By helping transform the latest technical and academic knowledge into practical solutions, the consortium can make Canada's manufacturing sector more globally competitive.

All major aerospace manufacturers are already using composite materials. Finding ways to develop and integrate composites more efficiently, said Hudek, can increase the competitiveness of western Canadian manufacturers and reveal new applications for the consortium's innovations.

Over the past year, CCMRD has been initiating new projects aimed at enhancing Canada's composites manufacturing capabilities.

Composites are made from two or more distinct materials that combine to create a better, stronger and more durable product. Today's composites consist of many different varieties: fibreglass, carbon or graphite. aramid, polypropylene and even naturally occurring materials such as flax, hemp and straw. These are bound by resin systems such as epoxy, polyester and polyurethane.

With this project completed, the Consortium has initiated plans for four new projects. Meanwhile, the Consortium keeps growing, having added two new members companies in the spring of 2011. It's a pretty hectic pace for a one-year old research organization, or what might be called a 'virtual technology centre.'

Consortium members are the first to gain access to the technology that emerges from their research. Since they do the bulk of the research themselves as part of the Consortium, they are already the best suited manufacturers to apply the results of the research to real-world projects.

"The resources we apply to products are the resources of our members and strategic partners like the National Research Council." said Hudek, who envisions the Consortium expanding further in the future to partner with universities and even private-sector niche providers who would be retained on a fee-for-services basis.

The current partners include both small and large enterprises, like Boeing, which is investing in the Consortium as part of its IRB commitment. The federal government's IRB policy requires prime contractors that are awarded major defence and security contracts to provide Canada with new business activities equal to 100 per cent of the contract value.

The CCMRD is an initiative of the Composites Innovation Centre (CIC), a not-for-profit organization located on the University of Manitoba campus in Winnipeg. WD has made significant investments to the CIC, which in turn provides support to the consortium. Since its founding, the CIC has been working to stimulate economic growth through innovative research and development, and the application of composite materials and technology for manufacturing industries.

**Canadian Publication Mail Agreement** No. 40063159

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### Government

# ACCESSWEST

# STRENGTHENING WESTERN CANADA'S SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

See how Western Canada's Shipbuilding Action Plan is creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity





# A Currer 2012 ESSWEST

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Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français ISSN: 1495-6802 (print) ISSN: 1495-6543 (online)

#### ON THE COVER:

Minister Yelich makes an announcement in Esquimalt, British Columbia as shipyard employees look on.





### MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE LYNNE YELICH

Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

I hen faced with an unprecedented global economic crisis, our Government responded by focusing on job creation and returning to economic growth. At Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), we are continuing to do our part by helping to build a strong, dynamic, and prosperous western Canadian economy.

At WD, we are dedicated to ensuring western Canadian businesses have the tools they need to succeed, at home and around the world. As you'll read in the coming pages of Access West, WD has accomplished this by making timely investments in a number of dynamic industries.

I am especially proud of the work our Government has done through WD with our Western Canada Shipbuilding Action

Plan. The Action Plan was launched to ensure western Canadian businesses benefit from our Government's \$33 billion shipbuilding initiative, and is playing a key role in showcasing and supporting Western Canada's shipbuilding industry. In the West, this role is more important than ever. Economic activity in British Columbia's shipbuilding industry is expected to bring up to 4,000 new jobs to the West Coast. With initiatives such as our Shipbuilding Summit, we have a plan to create jobs and secure long-term growth in an important industry.

But this is just the beginning. With investments made across Western Canada, we have created jobs and new economic opportunities. From British Columbia to Manitoba, WD has been an important partner in the western Canadian economy.

I am committed to ensuring that western businesses are wellpositioned to remain internationally competitive and successful. We do this with investments in training and equipment to guarantee that our workforce and industries are prepared to adapt and grow. As well, WD links small- and medium-sized businesses in the West with prime contractors and decision makers to ensure that they can take advantage of emerging market opportunities.

I am confident that WD's range of programs and activities create a foundation that builds the prosperity and competitiveness of the West. Together, we are working to build a stronger West for a stronger Canada.

# GROWING THE FOOD INDUSTRY

W W

Canada's food growers have always enjoyed a strong reputation world-wide. But as competitors race to bring new products to market, innovation is just as important as tried-and-true techniques. Leading that race in Saskatchewan is the Food Industry Development Centre, thanks in part to WD.





Minister Yelich and Food Centre staff operates a bottling machine for sour cherry and apple juice.

The Food Centre, as it's more commonly known, recently received an investment from WD to purchase new equipment for use in product and process development, which will enhance domestic and international competitiveness.

The availability of the new equipment will aid users in finding ways to reduce costs, enhance food safety, increase product lines and become more competitive. Investing in research and development facilities, such as the Food Centre, provides an integrated approach to developing the food

industry in Western Canada.

"The new funding has allowed us to adopt new technologies that will diversify our services and spur innovation in the industry," said Dan Prefontaine, President of the Centre. "By giving local companies access to the new technology, we're helping them focus their resources and reduce the risks that come with building their business and entering new markets."

Prefontaine said the West can expect to see long-term benefits for Saskatchewan's agriculture industry as a whole. New research and development activities are now in progress for a wide variety of value-added food products.

Federal support like this is particularly useful in Saskatchewan, where 300 food processors create \$2.5 billion in annual sales.

"We are pleased to promote increased competitiveness and productivity in Saskatchewan's food industry," said Minister Yelich. "WD's investment will help food processors create high-value jobs and stimulate economic growth across the province."

### TESTING STATE-OF-THE-ART IMAGING TECHNOLOGY

When it comes to the structural integrity of airplane or automotive parts, quality control is critical. At Red River College's new Centre for Non-Destructive Inspection Technologies (CNDI) in Winnipeg, the objective is to detect flaws in solid metal and composite objects without damaging them.

With federal support from WD, the CNDI is providing access to state-of-the-art non-destructive imaging equipment to inspect products before they reach the assembly floor. Aerospace companies with access to CNDI's new imager are now able to detect hidden flaws in materials more efficiently and effectively, and with greater confidence.

"This exciting project will create a competitive advantage for key sectors in Manitoba's economy," said Minister Yelich. "This technology will enable local companies to produce better and more cost-effective products that will

help create jobs and growth in our communities."

The most sophisticated equipment at the centre is the laser ultrasonic testing scanner, which uses one laser to generate an ultrasonic wave in the part being tested and a second to measure the wave's path. Any flaws will turn up in the form of changes to the path.

"The technology is incredibly sensitive," explained Fred Doern, chair of the college's Mechanical, Manufacturing and Communications program. "It was originally developed to study a modern stealth jet fighter. But it could very well be used on bus, airplane or auto parts."

According to Doern, there's a critical shortage of personnel trained in the use of these new imaging technologies, both at the senior and entry level.

Helping to address this shortage, an



education program will be created in partnership with industry to train, certify and upskill the non-destructive labour pool in Manitoba. WD funding was also used to purchase X-ray tomography equipment (the technology behind hospital CAT scans) and data analysis software. The new facility, located at the college's industrial campus at Magellan Aerospace in Winnipeg, will serve as both a testing facility for the local aerospace industry and a teaching and certification tool for the college.

### **COSMIC RAYS** TO IMPROVE MINING EXPLORATION



Looking for valuable mineral deposits while making a minimal impact on the environment has inspired a team of scientists in Vancouver to come up with a way to use a free resource: cosmic rays.

The technique allows geologists to take three-dimensional pictures of what lies beneath the surface, in the same way a CAT scan records images of the inside of a patient's body. But instead of using artificially generated rays, these geologists record the paths taken by muons, subatomic particles which are constantly bombarding the Earth. The density of the underground material affects each muon's path through the Earth, and detectors translate that data into information about the location and kind of ore.

A recent WD investment in Advanced Applied Physics Solution (AAPS) for their muon geotomography project helped demonstrate new technology that will enable high precision mineral exploration of dense ore deposits.

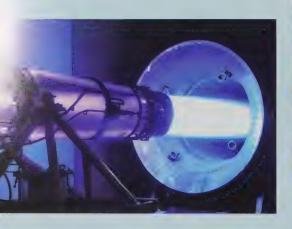
Led by UBC Professor Doug Bryman, who patented the ore-locating technology, the AAPS team has already built one prototype detector and tested it at a mine on Vancouver Island.

"We're now in the process of building additional detectors thanks to the WD funding, and we're going to take them to areas of the province where no one has looked for ore resources before," said Konstantine Sarafis, Vice-president of Business Development at AAPS.

"Mining is a major contributor to our resource-based economy. By investing in this project, our Government is ensuring that our key sectors develop the tools necessary to grow and provide highly-skilled jobs for Canadians," said Minister Yelich. "Our Government will continue to do its part to help build a more globally competitive and productive mining sector."

# DIVERSIFYING AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

A new engine-testing laboratory is poised to help keep Manitoba at the leading edge of aerospace technology development, thanks to an investment from WD.





Wind Tunnel Fans at the testing centre [L-R: Michael Kulkelko (WestCaRD), Brent Ostermann (StandardAero), Ross Hornby (GE Canada), Minister Yelich, Kim Olson (StandardAero), Vic Gerden (WestCaRD).

West Canitest R&D Inc. (WestCaRD) is teaming up with two industry leaders to turn an aircraft winter certification facility into a year-round testing operation. WD funds helped to purchase specialized equipment to refine aircraft engine performance, reduce pollution, and keep products competitive.

The \$50-million GE Aviation Engine Testing, Research and Development Centre opened this year at Winnipeg's James A. Richardson International Airport as part of GE and Standard Aero's efforts to stay on the forefront of cold-weather engine development. Now, through the WestCaRD contribution, it is expanding into a range of new fields, including smart sensors, high-speed data systems and emissions reduction equipment.

"Our Government's support solidifies Manitoba's place in global aerospace as the world's leading cold weather testing location," said Minister Yelich. "Investments like this are vital to fostering economic growth and creating high value jobs for Western Canadians."

The new centre will also be working with Red River College and the University of Manitoba, schools that specialize in aerospace technology.

By enabling this key sector to continue to succeed and thrive in a globally competitive environment, WD is helping the Manitoba aerospace industry contribute to a stronger and more diverse western Canadian economy.

# KEEPING UP WITH THE MINING SECTOR



Left: Minister Yelich announces significant investment towards specialized training equipment to be used by SIAST's new Mining Engineering Technology program.

When a resource sector booms, the search for qualified workers is on. In Saskatchewan, the demand for mining engineers trained on the latest equipment has never been higher. Five new mines are expected to open in the province over the next three years alone, and several more are expanding their operations.

Meeting that demand is the mission of the new Mining Engineering Technology Program at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). Funding for the new program, including an investment from WD, is

now in place, meaning the first students will be in classes this fall.

WD funds were used to purchase a wide variety of training equipment, from geophysical survey gear to computers and bore-hole cameras.

"We're buying the latest technology because we want to ensure our students learn on the type of equipment they'll use when they launch their careers with the mining industry," said SIAST's Dean of Technology, Jamie Hilts.

While other western provinces already have similar programs, the new SIAST courses are the first of their kind in Saskatchewan.

"Our Government recognizes the role this key sector plays in job creation and economic growth," says Minister Yelich. "We are proud to invest in equipment for this exciting new program, which will create jobs and support the rapidlygrowing mining industry."

Two years ago, the industry was looking for about 45 qualified mining technologists in the province each year. By 2017, more than eight times as many will be needed. When fully operational, the new course should be able to effectively address potential labour shortages and strengthen Saskatchewan's mining industry, now and in the future.

# GIVING CANADIAN ATHLETES A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE





Minister Yelich helps push new sports and wellness technology development with (from left) Mr. Claude Lemieux, CEO of Graf Canada; Dr. Jon Kolb, Director of Sport Science, Medicine, and Innovation for Canada's Own the Podium; Mr. Troy Crowder, President of True Stride and (in driver's seat) Brian Hughes, member of SAIT Polytechnic's fabrication lab team.

Sledding headfirst downhill at 130 km/h, chin just millimeters from an ice track, makes skeleton racing one of the most extreme and exciting sports. Winning takes more than courage and practice, though. That's where the Sports and Wellness Engineering Technology Institute (SWETI) comes in.

The Institute is playing a critical role in keeping Canada's skeleton racers at the top of their game. Two years after SWETI engineers took on the challenge of building a better sled in 2008, Canadians took four out of the top six spots at an international competition in Calgary. An investment from WD allowed SWETI to apply the same expertise to the sports and wellness sector as a whole. The funding will help the Institute improve its capacity for prototype design and fabrication and mechanical design engineering.

"Our Government is committed to supporting Alberta's growing strengths in developing innovative new products and technologies," said Minister Yelich. "By enabling businesses in the sports, recreation and wellness industries to improve their international competitiveness, this initiative will support economic growth and job creation in Western Canada."

The Institute, which is based at SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary, was established to work with companies and not-for-profit organizations to develop new materials and designs for sports and wellness products. Whether it's faster bobsleds, better-fitting hockey skates that reduce injuries, a bi-directional pedalling system for bicycles that allows athletes to ride longer, or even wheelchairs that can travel smoothly over varied terrain, the initiative is helping

to transform a wide range of innovative new concepts into reality. This enables businesses in the sports, recreation and wellness industries to improve their competitiveness and access the expertise needed to successfully bring their ideas to market.

"Highly skilled graduates from SAIT will be able to design and develop uniquely Canadian equipment to give our Canadian athletes and industry a competitive advantage," said Alex Zahavich, Director of Applied Research and Innovation Services at SAIT. "Now we have more opportunities to collaborate with partners in this growing industry."

Meanwhile, the Institute is hard at work making further refinements to the skeleton sleds that will be used by Canadians at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

# EXPANDING AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural research can take a long time. Researchers can wait a full year for crops to materialize. But what if you want to grow three generations each year? That is an advantage that the Phytotron is providing researchers at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) in Saskatoon.

One of the largest research greenhouses worldwide, the artificial growing environment at the U of S, is going through its own growth spurt, thanks to funding from a partnership of industry and government agencies.

"Our Government understands that investments in agricultural innovation create new crops for Canadian farmers, and help to strengthen our economy," said Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "That's why we are proud to be supporting the Phytotron and the important research it facilitates."

The expansion will bring the complex up to 100 percent capacity later this year. The WD support is being used to purchase and install eight new refrigeration units, which remove excess heat produced by the Phytotron lights,

and new computer controllers for most of the 183 chambers.

The economic advantages of this project can be felt throughout Western Canada. Pulse and lentil crops grown in the West produced \$2.2 billion in sales in 2009, and in 2008, export sales of canola reached \$2.8 billion. Both of these crops were developed at the U of S facility, resulting in an economic impact of \$14.1 billion across Canada and proving that the facility is instrumental in developing new varieties of crops that are generating sales around the world.

Minister Ritz announces funding to enhance the capacity of the Phytotron research facility at the U of S.





# BOOSTING WESTERN CANADA'S SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY



Minister Yelich makes an ennouncement in Esquiment, British Columbia as shipyard employees look on.

n February 2012, Minister Lynne Yelich stood before a crowd of western Canadian shipbuilders at the Esquimalt Graving Dock to announce the launch of Western Canada's Shipbuilding Action Plan. This Plan supports the West's shipbuilding industry and helps it to remain internationally competitive and sustainable.

Developed in support of the Government of Canada's 30-year, \$33 billion National Shipbuilding and Procurement Strategy (NSPS), Western Canada's Shipbuilding Action Plan ensures that the West's shipbuilding industry is well-positioned to pursue opportunities presented by the NSPS.

"Our Government is committed to supporting Western Canada's maritime and shipbuilding industry," said Minister Yelich. "Our Action Plan for this industry will create jobs and stimulate long term economic growth in Western Canada."

When Vancouver Shipyards, part of the Seaspan group of companies, was selected under the NSPS to build the next generation of non-combat vessels for the Canadian navy, it didn't take long for the B.C. shipbuilding industry

to see the economic potential.

As a concrete first step in implementing the Action Plan, WD made an investment toward the creation of the Industrial Marine Training and Applied Research Centre (IMTARC) in Esquimalt. When operational, it will supply entry-level training as well as leadership and management, technology transfer and revitalized apprenticeship programs.

FEATURE www.wd-deo-gc.ca





Above: A Frigate undergoes upgrades at the Victoria Shipyards. Photo courtesy Seaspan Shipyards.

IMTARC will ensure the sustainability of British Columbia's shipbuilding and repair industry by training highly qualified workers. Programs will be both broad and specific to the sector's requirements, including entry level training for new entrants, leadership and management skills, technology transfer, and revitalized apprenticeship programs.

Economic activity in British Columbia's shipbuilding industry is expected to grow from \$450 million to \$800 million, bringing up to 4,000 new jobs to North Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo and Port Alberni. Ensuring that Canadians fill those jobs is the primary goal of the new centre, which is being run by the B.C. Resource Training Organization.

Delivering on its goal to bring together western small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with key players in

the shipbuilding industry, WD partnered with Seaspan Marine to host a Shipbuilding Summit on May 23, 2012. This event allowed western SMEs to meet with Vancouver Shipyards and Irving Shipbuilding, as well as their first tier suppliers, to discuss specific shipbuilding projects and the opportunities they offer Western Canada. WD intends to build on this summit by hosting supplier development tours that showcase Western Canada's shipbuilding capabilities and link western businesses to the key decision makers.

Over the coming months and years, WD will continue to examine opportunities to link western SMEs with prime contractors, educate stakeholders and examine investment opportunities that will further support Western Canada's shipbuilding industry, create jobs and encourage economic growth in the West.

### **CONNECTING WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES AT THE WESTERN CANADIAN** SHIPBUILDING SUMMIT

On May 23, 2012, as an important step in delivering Western Canada's Shipbuilding Action Plan, WD partnered with Seaspan Marine to host the Western Canadian Shipbuilding Summit in Vancouver. Minister Yelich delivered opening remarks, outlining the Government of Canada's ongoing support for Western Canada's shipbuilding industry.

"Events like the Shipbuilding Summit are crucial in helping western Canadian businesses showcase their expertise and continue to grow," said Minister Yelich. "This is a valuable part of Western Canada's Shipbuilding Action Plan, which is creating jobs, economic growth, and long-term prosperity in the West."

The event brought together over 350 small - and medium-sized businesses to connect with new business opportunities in British Columbia's thriving shipbuilding industry.

## STRENGTHENING ALBERTA'S **BEE AND HONEY INDUSTRY**



BEES are pollinators of countless crops around the world. Few species rival their importance to food production and the agriculture industry. WD is helping improve our understanding of what bees need to stay healthy with an investment in the new National Bee Diagnostic Centre.

Located at the Beaverlodge Research Farm, the Centre will make Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) and the province of Alberta a leader in beekeeping diagnostic technology. The funding covers capital expenses, including the assembly of a three-piece modular and mobile laboratory - the only one of its kind in Canada.

"This is the ideal location for us," said the Centre's Director, Bruce Rutley. "The College already has the only commercial beekeeping training

program in the country and the leading bee researchers."

The need for comprehensive diagnostic services for bees recently assumed an unprecedented level of urgency with the advent of "colony collapse disorder," a poorly understood and sometimes dramatic decline in bee populations across North America and Europe.

Addressing this problem is crucial to keeping Western Canada's beekeeping industry healthy and competitive, which is exactly what this project is helping to do.

The Centre will focus on the detection and diagnosis of diseases, provide valuable data to bee researchers, and help ensure beekeepers meet government regulations. By performing hundreds of tests each year for Canada's 6,700 commercial beekeepers, the Centre will also help ensure the health of bee populations across the country. Aw



### **CANADA'S BEE INDUSTRY** BY THE NUMBERS:

Annual honey production exceeds \$100 million nationally.

Approximately 475,000 colonies are located in the prairie provinces and they produce 80% of Canada's crop.

Bees, through their pollination of fruit, vegetables and canola, increase agricultural production by two to eight times, with an estimated value of \$2 billion dollars annually across Canada.

There are approximately 7,000 beekeepers in Canada, operating a total of 600,000 colonies of honeybees.



Peace River MP, Chris Warkentin, announces funding towards Grande Prairie Regional College to establish the National Bee Diagnostic Centre.

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Left to right: Dr. Francisco Alhanati, Acting Managing Director of C-FER Technologies; Brian Wagg, Manager of New Technology Initiatives for C-FER Technologies; MP Mike Lake; and Mel Johnson, TransCanada Pipelines.

## ENSURING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND **SAFETY OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION**

There aren't many places where industry can test a natural gas pipeline, but the Centre for Frontier Engineering Research (C-FER) Technology's operation at the Edmonton Research Park can do just that. Now, thanks to support from WD, the list of tests the Park can accommodate is getting longer.

"The funds from WD have increased our capacity to match the growing need for tests in extreme environments in the Arctic and undersea," said Brian Wagg, Manager of New Technology Initiatives at C-FER. "This is giving Canadian industry the chance to get at the gas that people know is there, but has been trapped because of a lack of transport infrastructure."

Arctic and subsea environments impose great stress on pipelines. C-FER's labs allow engineers to bend and pull lengths of pipe to find out how cracks will behave under the most trying conditions on land, and test whether they can tolerate the high pressures of the seabed. Without that knowledge, assuring regulators that pipelines are safe in the far north could be difficult.

"Our government's investment in this initiative will support C-FER Technologies in continuing to meet the growing demand for innovative technologies, materials and processes," said MP Mike Lake.

C-FER is a not-for-profit applied research organization that helps manufacturers and service companies carry out full-scale testing of large components used in undersea, arctic and oil sands operations before taking them to the field. Its testing facility is unique in Canada and is one of only a handful of such facilities in the world.

The WD support is also expected to help generate spin-off business and enable companies to more efficiently develop oil and gas resources across Canada. Aw



Workers harvest a crop of cranberries in Delta, BC.

# ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS IN THE CRANBERRY INDUSTRY

The vast majority of the cranberries grown in Canada - and about 12 percent of North America's entire supply - come from the lower Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. Protecting and expanding that industry is the mission of a new research centre funded in part by a contribution from WD.

The Cranberry Research Centre, located in Delta, B.C., will be the first of its kind in Canada, and just the fourth on the continent. Once complete, researchers will experiment with both established

and new varieties of cranberries in hopes of increasing yields.

"We'll be trying to determine which varieties have the best characteristics to grow in our climate and environment," said Todd May, President of the BC Cranberry Research Society, which manages the new facility. "What we're building should be able to test just about everything that could affect a cranberry farm."

"Cranberry farmers play a vital role in keeping the region's economy strong and creating jobs," said Parliamentary Secretary Kerry-Lynne Findlay. "Our

Government recognizes the importance of safeguarding and strengthening this industry, which in turn will bring the potential for job creation and economic growth."

The creation of the research centre will bring both short- and long-term economic benefits to the region: the construction of the facility will create immediate local jobs and, further down the road, the B.C. Cranberry Growers Association estimates that for every 80,000 pounds of berries grown annually in BC, one full time job is created or maintained.

# HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT BY BURNING WASTE



Through an innovative, groundbreaking technology, wood and agricultural waste material can now be burned to create a form of charcoal called biochar. which can be used to store carbon in the soil rather than releasing it into the atmosphere.

With an investment from WD, a team at Lakeland College in Alberta is preparing to apply the technique on a wider scale. Biochar is the end product of pyrolysis and a soil additive that can help soil retain water and nutrients and increase crop productivity. It can even enhance revegetation rates on reclaimed land. Though the chemistry of pyrolysis is well understood, the industrial application of what is essentially a form of charcoal is still a relatively new concept to most farmers.

"People have played with this for a while. Our goal is to get some hard numbers on what's feasible," said Melvin Mathison, Dean of Environmental Sciences at Lakeland College. "It's got a lot of potential."

Mathison said that several companies have wood-based by-products that don't have a lot of economic uses, but his team is working hard to turn that waste into a revenue stream.

The funding is being used to purchase a pair of mobile pyrolysis units, which will convert wood and other agricultural wastes into biochar at a rate of one tonne a day. The goal is to help landowners convert their agricultural waste into biochar and apply it to their fields. AW

### WHAT IS PYROLYSIS?

The burning of wood and other organic materials without oxygen is known as pyrolysis. Like combustion, it is a high-temperature chemical process. Unlike combustion, it takes place in the absence of oxygen and so does not produce carbon dioxide. The main end product of pyrolysis is charcoal, or biochar, which when buried, stores carbon in the soil rather than releasing it into the atmosphere.

### COMPOSITES: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE IN MANUFACTURING

Composites are found everywhere, from bathtubs and shower stalls to gas stations and amusement park water slides. And composite technology is behind many fascinating advances; for example, research involving reinforced carbon and glass fibres is producing significant innovations that are revolutionizing aerospace, shipbuilding, sports equipment and industrial products.

And with both of the world's largest aircraft manufacturers - Boeing and Airbus – shifting away from traditional materials in aircraft manufacturing in favour of carbon fibre reinforced composites, it's clear that composites are the way of the future. In fact, composite materials make up over 50 percent of the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft.

WD recognizes that Western Canada's composite industry, researchers and service providers could use a little of that kind of synergy themselves. To help with this, the department has contributed more than \$9.8 million to the creation of a Pan-Western Composites Research Network.

"Investments like this are key in furthering our goal of creating jobs and growth," said Minister Yelich. "It will go a long way toward creating the conditions that will help western Canadian aerospace, automotive, and marine manufacturing sectors succeed. Businesses in those sectors are increasingly using composite materials because they represent a durable, lightweight, lower cost alternative to use in their manufacturing processes."

The new network, led by Professor Anoush Poursartip, a composites expert who has received global recognition for his work on process design software and the aerospace industry, will be based at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Network nodes will be set up at the University of Victoria, the University of the Fraser Valley, and at the Composites Innovation Centre in Winnipeg. Additional nodes are expected to come online very soon in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Staff will work with businesses at each node, distributing important information, training, and networking.

### WHAT ARE COMPOSITES?

The guiding principle of composite material is creating strength through diversity. Composites, which are also called reinforced plastics, can be used to create a vast array of high quality products with significant market demand. They are the combination of two or more substances to create something that does the job better than either part can do on its own.

Poursartip said composites present both opportunities and challenges.

"When you get it right, you are a hero, and the benefits are huge," he said. "Simply, you can make lighter structures more cheaply. Lighter means less fuel consumption, less environmental impact."

"Other countries are investing significant amounts in the field," added Poursartip.

"But we believe the Pan-Western Composites Research Network is different. We're creating something that bridges the gap between academic research and commercial development."

Poursartip said that already, the network has had "huge buy-in" from the western Canadian industry, and international firms have also expressed strong interest. But the arrival of the new funding marked a critical turning point for the network. "WD is really being visionary in understanding the need of the composite industry," he said.

Sean McKay, Executive Director of Winnipeg's Composites Innovation Centre, said the network will help the West prepare for the challenges of industry competition as it will further industry's understanding of composite manufacturing processes.

McKay emphasized the importance of assimilating the necessary science and fundamental understanding of manufacturing issues into everyday operations to reduce defects and improve efficiencies. These measures are "essential to remain competitive in today's global market place," said McKay.

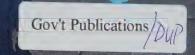
The network complements other ongoing initiatives aimed at developing and demonstrating composite manufacturing technologies in Canada, said McKay. One example is the Canadian Composites Manufacturing R&D consortium, which was created to promote national collaboration on composite manufacturing and is proving how partnerships can create greater opportunities for success.

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

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# SUPPORTING JOBS AND GROWTH

State-of-the-art mobile training unit brings the classroom to the students in Northwestern B.C.



### **FEATURE STORY:**

## BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES -

Government of Canada delivering new infrastructure improvement program





# fall/winter 2012 ESSWEST

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Access West is published by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

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Disponible aussi en français ISSN: 1495-6802 (print) ISSN: 1495-6543 (online)

#### ON THE COVER:

Minister Yelich meets with a future heavy equipment operator from Northwest Community College.





### MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE LYNNE YELICH

he Harper Government is focused on what matters to Canadians: jobs and economic growth, in every region of the country. At Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), we have helped to achieve these objectives by investing in new economic opportunities by working with industry and communities.

As you'll read in the following pages of Access West, WD is investing in the West and Canada's future. By partnering with industry and educators, we have made investments that will ensure Canadians have the skills and training required to meet market needs. For example, by investing in equipment that will create a mobile classroom, as we did at B.C.'s Northwest Community

College, students in rural communities can gain the necessary experience to participate in a booming resource sector. Or, as with our investment that will enable Red River College to purchase specialized food science equipment to expand technological capabilities at its new Paterson GlobalFoods Institute. Through these projects and many others, the Harper Government is continuing to ensure that Western Canada's need for skilled workers is met, while helping to create high-paying jobs and growing the economy.

I'm also proud to say that WD is continuing to deliver on its commitment to building stronger communities through its work on our Government's new Community Infrastructure

Improvement Fund (CIIF). As part of Economic Action Plan 2012, our Government is investing \$150 million over two years to support repairs and improvements to existing community facilities across Canada. At WD, we will be delivering \$46 million to strengthen our communities in Western Canada.

By working with industry partners and communities, we are creating a foundation for jobs, growth and long-term prosperity across Western Canada. Together, we are working to build a stronger West for a stronger Canada.

# CANADA'S FARM PROGRESS SHOW WELCOMES THE WORLD

After earning the distinction of being the largest agriculture trade show in Canada by the Trade Show News Network, the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Farm Progress Show broke its own attendance record yet again this year.



Show Manager Rob O'Connor credits the Government of Canada's Incoming Buyers Program (IBP) and its unique ability to attract foreign investors to the Farm **Progress Show for its** success.

"The Incoming Buyers Program brings businesses from around the world to Regina to develop opportunities that will create new jobs and economic growth for Canadians," said MP Tom Lukiwski, "This investment builds on the success of WD's support for the previous Incoming Buyers Program and illustrates our Government's commitment to supporting Canadian firms as they pursue exporting opportunities in the global marketplace."

The program, which has been in effect now for four years, brings businesses from around the world to Regina to develop opportunities that will create jobs and economic growth.

"By offering this carrot as a gesture to international buyers, they choose our show over those farm shows in France, the U.S. and a number of other countries," said O'Connor. "It was a fantastic year. Our international numbers have increased every year for the past three years thanks to this program."



A record 652 international buyers from 55 countries, including China, India, the United States, Russia, Kazakhstan, Australia and Mongolia, were in attendance. There were also some 806 exhibitors - another record.

Each international buyer spends, on average, \$2.5 million at the show, which is a tremendous return on investment, noted O'Connor.

Sales were brisk for land preparation equipment, harvesting equipment and tractors, said O'Connor, adding that this year, 24 companies used the venue to launch new products. A (From left): Former Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport for Saskatchewan, Bill Hutchinson; MP Tom Lukiwski; Rob O'Connor, Show Manager, Farm Progress Show; and Mark Allan, President and CEO, Evraz Place at funding announcement for the Incoming Buyers Program.



## SASKATOON HOSTS AEROSPACE FORUM TO SHOWCASE EXPERTISE



< Minister Yelich meets with Prime Contractors at the Saskatchewan Aerospace & Defence Opportunities Forum. From left: Stanley Ing, Mercedes-Benz Canada; Chris Dekker, CEO, Enterprise Saskatchewan; Laurie St.Louis, DEW Engineering; Brian Carter, President, Seaspan Shipyards; Minister Yelich; Eugene J. Stewart, MS2; Gerhard (Gary) Hones, LM Canada; Colin Preston, DEW Engineering; Doug Brown, General Dynamics Canada.

Saskatchewan's small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) gathered in Saskatoon earlier this year to meet with major players in Western Canada's dynamic and growing aerospace, defence and shipbuilding sectors.

WD and Enterprise Saskatchewan partnered to host the Saskatchewan Aerospace and Defence Opportunities Forum, which enabled the province's SMEs to establish valuable business connections with industrial titans, such as Seaspan Marine, General Dynamics and General Electric.

"Our Government is committed to supporting small and medium-sized businesses by connecting them with opportunities for reaching new markets throughout Western Canada," said Minister Yelich.

Mark Noete, Director of Manufacturing at Saskatoon's SED Systems, which manufactures and designs electronic systems and units, said the Forum was an excellent opportunity to showcase his company's expertise.

"Anytime you can get that quality of suppliers in our city it is exceptionally valuable," said Mr. Noete, adding that Seaspan, GE and others visited SED during their time in Saskatoon.

"It helps you build relationships with them, and it helps them understand your capabilities."

The Forum demonstrated the exciting opportunities resulting from the federal government's Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) policy, which requires companies that have been awarded federal projects to re-invest 100 percent of the contract back into Canadian industry. As well, Seaspan and other companies made presentations at the Forum to explain what they require from SMEs to fulfill their contracts, enabling them to learn how they could capitalize on these key opportunities.

The event particularly sought to showcase Western Canada's shipbuilding capabilities, which received a huge boost in October 2011 when the federal government's \$33 billion National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS) was announced.

"Many western businesses will have the opportunity to capitalize on secondary opportunities available through the strategy by offering their specialized expertise, skilled labour and products," explained Minister Yelich.

The NSPS is expected to create about 4,000 high-value jobs on the West Coast, and to produce a range of economic opportunities for local small- and mediumsized businesses throughout Western Canada.

Among those opportunities will be skilled work in a variety of sectors, such as steel manufacturing, information technology, and defence systems development and integration. As well, SMEs across the West will benefit not only through the construction of the vessels, but from work related to repairing and refitting. .....

## **IMPROVED TESTING CAPABILITIES** FOR MANITOBA'S GLACIER FACILITY

The Canadian Environmental Test and Research Center Inc. (EnviroTREC) recently received WD funding towards the purchase of new equipment to improve and expand environmental aerospace testing in Manitoba.

This equipment will be used at the Global Aerospace Centre for Icing and Environmental Research (GLACIER), a joint-venture partnership between jet engine manufacturers Pratt & Whitney Canada and Rolls-Royce Canada.

The GLACIER test facility is located in Thompson, where the subarctic climate allows for simulation of the icy conditions an engine may have to endure when flying through clouds at freezing temperatures.

Although temperatures in this northern Manitoba city stay well below zero for a significant part of the year, the new funding will allow the facility to offer more advanced types of testing outside of the coldest months. These added capabilities will bring in new contracts, and boost the economy.

"Our Government's top priority is creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity," said Minister Yelich. "This investment will support the aerospace industry in Manitoba by strengthening the supply chain and providing opportunities to commercialize new products."

Through this project, specialized testing equipment will be purchased for testing aerospace engine emissions and



alternative aerospace fuels, as well as for aerospace engine design validation.

WD funding for this project builds on a previous investment towards the creation of the GLACIER facility. Federal support for the development of GLACIER, which opened in October 2010, promoted cutting-edge technology and created high-quality jobs and educational opportunities in northern Manitoba.

The western Canadian aerospace industry employs approximately 27,000 people and generates more than \$4.5 billion in

Global Aerospace Centre for Icing and Environmental Research (GLACIER) in Thompson, Manitoba. Photo coutesy of Rolls-Royce.

annual revenues, and Manitoba boasts the largest aerospace industry in Western Canada. This new investment will help keep Manitoba and Western Canada at the forefront of aerospace research and development.

# CREATING COMMUNITIES,

Communities across Canada are able to make much-needed repairs and improvements to their local infrastructure thanks to the federal government's Community Infrastructure Improvement Fund (CIIF), a \$150-million national investment made as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan 2012.



< L-R: Don George, Kenaston Lions Club, Minister Yelich, and Bernie Vossen, Viscount Archery Club at launch of CIIF in the West.

WD is delivering the funding in Western Canada, with an allocation of \$46.2 million over two years to be divided between Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

CIIF targets repairs to community infrastructure, such as local arenas, libraries, community centres, sports

fields and bike paths. Local, regional, and First Nations governments, as well as non-profit organizations like service clubs, were eligible to apply to get funding for their projects.

"Community facilities are the beating hearts of Canadian communities from coast to coast to coast, providing places where families, friends and neighbours can gather," said Minister Yelich at the program launch in Kenaston, Saskatchewan on July 5. "But this new Fund is more than an investment in infrastructure, it's an investment in people. This Fund will create local jobs by stimulating construction activity for the next two years."

Construction is now underway on many of these projects, and must be completed by March 31, 2014. As part of the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan 2012, this funding will provide broad-based economic benefits for western communities, including local job creation.

### **PROJECT SNAPSHOTS: ACROSS THE WEST**

### **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

The Castlegar and District Public Library will enjoy upgrades thanks to WD funding through CIIF. With federal support, the City of Castlegar will improve the energy efficiency of the library by replacing the library's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, in addition to three furnaces. This project will contribute to the development of the community by creating economic growth and improving local facilities.

Minister Fletcher with Don Pickering, President, Charleswood Legion, at CIIF funding announcement towards the Royal Canadian Legion





Minister Yelich announces CIIF funding to make upgrades to the Castlegar and District Public Library's heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

#### ALBERTA ·

Thanks to federal support, the Walsh and District Community Association Hall is being enhanced to make it more accessible to the public. Through this CIIF project, the Community Association is renovating the hall's kitchen by improving access for mobilityimpaired individuals and upgrading kitchen equipment. The renovations will create immediate short-term jobs and ensure that even more members of the community can easily and comfortable enjoy the hall.

### **SASKATCHEWAN**

With the help of WD funding through CIIF, the Village of Paradise Hill is upgrading its local arena to enhance public safety and create local jobs. Renovations to the arena include installing posts and tempered safety glass on the boards surrounding the ice surface. These improvements will allow the arena to remain operational and safe for public use while providing economic benefits and an improved space for the local community.

#### **MANITOBA**

With CIIF funding, WD is helping to make the Royal Canadian Legion in Winnipeg more energy efficient while growing the local economy. By replacing its roof system, two rooftop heating and air conditioning units, a new lighting system, and the main floor ceiling, CIIF is creating local jobs and improving a space the entire community can enjoy.

### AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH TRANSFORMS FEEDSTOCK TO PHARMACEUTICALS





MP Blaine Calkins announces federal funding towards strengthening Alberta's agricultural sector through the development of new technologies and products.

But first, the road to the marketplace runs through Lacombe, Alberta, where last spring WD teamed up with the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund (ACIDF) to establish a manufacturing facility to test and commercialize the new crop-based products.

"This initiative will create additional demand for barley and other crops while providing new market and contract growing opportunities for western Canadian farmers," said Doug Walkey, Executive Director, ACIDF. "The pilot plant is another step leading towards realizing the potential for both branch plants of international companies and the development of new manufacturing companies here on the Prairies."

Alan Hall, Manager of New Initiatives for ACIDF, said the pilot project, which is expected to be operational in the summer of 2013, already has 32 companies from North America, Europe and Asia under contract and another 500 have expressed interest.

The new Lacombe plant will use feedstock, primarily barley proteins, as natural polymers - think plastic - in commercial products, instead of synthetic polymers.

This research is being done by the University of Alberta's Dr. Lingyun Chen, who in 2007 created a scientific program to determine if the different ingredients found in barley - such as lipids, carbohydrates, protein and cellulose - could have a use other than feeding livestock.

When she found that the barley proteins and cellulose could be used as a natural alternative to synthetic polymers in consumer products, the next step was to begin large-scale testing in order to prove its commercial value to industry.

That's when WD stepped in to provide ACDIF with the funding to buy and install the equipment needed to make the new Lacombe manufacturing facility a reality.

And already, the plant is showing signs of success.

"The level of interest that has already been generated within the private sector is an indication of the tremendous potential for this initiative to attract investment," said Minister Yelich. "This will lead to increased opportunities for manufacturing in our agricultural sector."



Minister Yelich and Red River College executives with students of the College's Culinary and Hospitality Program at Paterson GlobalFoods Institute.

## RED RIVER COLLEGE HOME TO **NEW FOOD TESTING CENTRE**

Manitoba's Red River College is poised to become one of Canada's top culinary and food-testing centres thanks to an investment by WD in its new Paterson GlobalFoods Institute.

The funding enabled the college to purchase specialized food science equipment for its Paterson Institute, scheduled to open January 2013 in the historic Union Bank Tower in Winnipeg's Exchange District.

"Our Government's top priority is creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity," said Minister Yelich. "This investment will help ensure the right conditions to develop, test, and commercialize products to bring to market in the food industry."

Ray Hoemsen, Director of Applied Research and Commercialization at Red River College, said the new equipment's advanced technological capabilities are helping establish the college as one of Canada's leading culinary and foodtesting institutes.

"We now have one of the best-equipped facilities in terms of food preparation and advanced technology, particularly in the key areas of testing, tasting, preparation and storage for commercial use," said Mr. Hoemsen.

Equipped with this new technology, the College's students and faculty will work directly with local industry to develop and test new food products and processes, ensuring healthier and tastier foods for Canadians.

By working in partnership with private industry, the College is translating its knowledge and technology into new commercial food products for large markets and creating new jobs.

As a result, Red River College is helping create new business opportunities by boosting the competitiveness of Manitoba's food and beverage processing industry - an industry that represents close to one quarter of the province's manufacturing output, and \$4 billion annually in shipments.

## STRONGER PLASTICS ARE MANUFACTURING SUCCESS



### The sky's the limit for Alberta's already dynamic entrepreneurs and plastics manufacturing businesses.

The latest leap involves the collaboration between the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT Polytechnic) and Alberta-based Alta Injection Molding (AIM) to establish and equip a Centre for Innovation. The new Enerplus Centre for Innovation, which was made possible by a WD investment in February 2012, supports companies working to create new products that use composite materials, generally known as reinforced plastics.

"For manufacturing businesses in Alberta, this translates into exciting new possibilities to develop applications for markets which range from transportation and construction to aerospace and defence," said Minister Yelich.

"Businesses in those sectors are increasingly using composite materials because they represent a durable, lower cost alternative to use in their manufacturing processes."

Broadly speaking, composite materials can be used to produce a large variety of high-quality products ranging from sporting goods and automobile parts to corrosion resistant pipes and commercial aircraft components.

Gerry Darichuk, President of AIM, said Enerplus, which opened in the fall, will help grow Alberta's plastics manufacturing industry.

Enerplus will not only help to increase the number of new products using

composite materials that are commercialized and manufactured in Alberta, but will also create opportunities to train students preparing for careers in the composites industry.

"This investment allows us to optimize resources and give SAIT students, faculty and clients access to facilities that otherwise we wouldn't be able to extend to them," said Dr. Alex Zahavich, SAIT's Director of Applied Research and Innovation Services (ARIS). "This significant public partnership also gives AIM and its industry partners access to SAIT for future workforce development and will help retain intellectual capital." | w

## WESTERN PRODUCERS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW TECHNOLOGY

Prairie grain producers will benefit from research using a new seed-sorting machine imported by the University of Saskatchewan (U of S).

The Bo-Mill TriQ seed sorter has the capacity to separate top grade kernels of grain used for breads, beer and pasta, from the lower-grade kernels, such as those used for animal feed.

With support from WD, the U of S's Canadian Feed Research Centre in North Battleford purchased the revolutionary seed-sorting machine from Sweden. Commercial adoption of this machine has the potential to increase the value of western Canadian grain by as much as \$320 million per year.

"Our Government's first priority is creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity and we are confident this equipment will increase the value of cereal crops produced in Canada," said Agriculture



BoMill seed sorter in operation



Dr. Tom Scott, Research Chair, Feed Processing Technology, University of Saskatchewan, demonstrates how the BoMill Seed Sorter operates at the Canadian Feed Research Centre.

Minister Gerry Ritz. "Using this technology to sort and grade each kernel will generate greater profits for our grain producers, creating jobs and lasting economic growth."

The Bo-Mill TriQ seed sorter is able to assess each kernel of grain using an infrared light for weight, protein, starch and moisture. It also has a high-volume sort capacity for commercial volumes of grain, which means it can sort 30,000 seeds per second, or three tonnes per

The existing seed grading system does not allow for such precision in sorting grain kernels. Often, the lower-quality

kernels make up a very small portion of a producer's entire load of grain, but the price the farmer or producer receives for that load is based on the few bad kernels.

U of S scientists and graduate students are investigating how to adapt the Bo-Mill seed sorter to western Canadian crops, such as wheat, barley and durum.

"This technology will potentially open up new markets for very high end premium breads or new types of pasta or beer, and improve the safety and consistency of these products," said U of S Research Chair Tom Scott.

### MOBILE FACILITY SAVES SOUTHERN B.C. MFAT PRODUCERS TIME AND MONEY

Residents of south-central British Columbia will soon be enjoying a lot more locallyproduced, higher-quality meat and poultry on their dinner plates.

That's because earlier this year, the Grand Forks and Boundary Regional Agricultural Society (GFBRAS) received funding from WD to acquire and set up a licensed mobile abattoir to serve the region.

"Our Government is proud to invest in the agri-food industry," said MP Dan Albas. "By supporting local meat and poultry industries, we are working to

promote a solid foundation that will create jobs while growing the local economy in the Southern Interior Region of B.C."

"We foresee that this project will not only improve the quality and availability of food in the region, but will significantly bolster the economic stability of the southern interior and build more sustainable economies in these communities," said Roly Russell, President of the Grand Forks and Boundary Regional Agricultural Society.

Due to tightened safety regulations that require all meat for human consumption to come from a licensed processing

facility, it has become difficult for small-to medium-scale meat producers to compete with bigger companies.

This was particularly the case for those producers in Grand Forks and region. The closest licensed facility was located 100 kilometres away in Rock Creek, which left farmers facing prohibitive transportation costs to ensure their products met current safety standards.

Bringing the abattoir directly on-site saves farmers time and money, which translates into better food and an economic boost for the region.

### OIL SANDS OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR SKILLED WORKERS

Portage College has purchased 14 new pieces of equipment to expand its Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) training program in Boyle, Alberta, thanks to support from WD.

"Our Government's top priority is the creation of jobs, growth and longterm prosperity," said Fort McMurray-Athabasca MP Brian Jean. "This initiative will help to develop a highly skilled and flexible workforce, while ensuring smalland medium-sized businesses remain competitive in the local and global marketplace."

The new equipment means Portage College no longer has to lease or borrow equipment, which gives students guaranteed training hours with specific equipment - motor graders, excavators and track dozers - something for which employers are looking.

"When we were leasing or borrowing equipment, we were subject to the needs of the companies that we were leasing from, so we couldn't always get the equipment we needed," said Stuart Leitch, Dean of Community and Industry Training Initiatives.

Hands-on experience with a range of equipment means that new graduates are unlikely to require additional training when they find employment. That's good news for Alberta businesses, as they can reduce their overhead costs while increasing efficiency and productivity.

The investment will not only help address the growing shortage of skilled labour in oil sands development, but will also contribute to the sustainability of smaller communities. This is because many oil companies sub-contact the construction of sites - tasks such as building roads or excavating drainage ditches - to local firms in the areas where they operate. Aw

# **BRINGING THE CLASSROOM** TO THE STUDENTS





٨ Student Stephen Wagner watches as Minister Yelich tries her hand at operating a virtual excavator.

### As Canada s eximinis recovery game mumentum, the demand for addition workers is steadily

This is especially true in Northwestern British Columbia, where the number of mining, power, port and industrial development projects is growing faster than the workforce.

As the demand for skilled workers in the Northwest continues to climb. Northwest Community College (NWCC) is taking steps to ensure that this need for expertise is met and that the Northern economy continues to prosper.

WD provided funding for NWCC to expand its heavy equipment operator training across the region. The expansion involved the purchase of 10 virtual training simulators, along with a heavyduty truck and 32-foot trailer.

"This investment is an excellent example of how our Government is working to create jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity in Western Canada," said Minister Yelich. "Through this support, we are ensuring our northern communities have access to the essential equipment and programs they need to capitalize on their economic opportunities."

These simulators will allow students to attempt challenging maneuvers in dangerous occupational scenarios, with no risk to themselves or the equipment. The truck and trailer make it possible to bring this technology to students in rural communities, where they would normally have little or no access to this type of training.

"The state-of-the-art mobile training unit allows NWCC to deliver the highest quality programs and training in all communities, including the rural and remote communities and industrial work

sites in our region," says Beverly Moore-Garcia, Vice President, Education and Student Services, NWCC.

Jessie Louie of the Tahltan First Nation, a recent graduate and one of two female students in the program, is a prime example of how successful the program has been.

Debra Wall, Marketing Communications Advisor at NWCC, said Jessie was "immediately hired by Finning and has been operating heavy equipment all summer. She loves the work and is very happy with the program and the doors NWCC has opened for her."

As it did for Jessie, heavy equipment operator training prepares students for a wide variety of jobs because the skills apply to many different facets of industrial development, such as road building, forestry, excavation and mining site preparation.

### **ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS** BUILDING GLOBAL CONNECTIONS



Minister Yelich announces pan-western funding for Mitacs to deliver three internship programs. Photo credit: Marilyn Mikkelsen

A WD investment in academic internships will help western Canadian companies gain a competitive advantage by attracting international students to Canadian universities which will develop linkages between Canada and emerging economies.

"Our Government's top priority is creating jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity," said Minister Yelich. "Through this project we will strengthen Western Canada's international engagement and foster commercialization and business development."

The funding was provided by WD to Mitacs, a national organization based in B.C. that offers research and training programs to the next generation of scientists and entrepreneurs.

The investment will support three internship programs in Western Canada over three years.

The Accelerate and Elevate programs connect Canadian businesses with graduate students to help the companies solve tough business problems and work on leading projects.

The programs enable students to work on the commercialization of new products, technologies and services, which in turn help the business increase its competitiveness.

The Globalink program recruits international students to work on important projects for western Canadian universities. Since the launch of this program three years ago, it has welcomed more than 300 undergraduate students from India, China, Brazil and Mexico to 28 Canadian universities.

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40063159

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